



University of California, Irvine
Clinic for Aging Research & Education
24361 El Toro Road #150
Laguna Woods, CA 92637

Return Service Requested

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Santa Ana, CA
U.S. Permit no.1106

Old News is Good News The 90+ Study

Old News is Good News is the newsletter of *The 90+ Study* and is designed to keep you informed of progress in our research. This newsletter is sent to participants and their families as well as members of the Leisure World Cohort.

SEPTEMBER, 2018. Vol. 9



Photo provided by the Alzheimer's Association.

Dr. Kawas recently received two of the most prestigious awards in the field of Alzheimer's and dementia research

AWARDS

In 2016, *The 90+ Study* team received the Robert Newcomb Interdisciplinary Team Science Award. This award given by UCI's

Institute for Clinical and Translational Science recognizes teams who bring together researchers from diverse, trans-, multi-, and interdisciplinary backgrounds in projects that advance biomedical and clinical research. We are proud of our team recognition award!

In 2017, *Dr. Claudia Kawas*, principal investigator of *The 90+ Study*, received two of the most prestigious awards given in the field of Alzheimer's and dementia research. The Potamkin Prize, referred to as the Nobel Prize of Alzheimer's research, is given each year to leading researchers by the American Academy of Neurology. The *Lifetime Achievement Award in Alzheimer's Disease Research* is given by the Alzheimer's Association at their Annual International Conference. We are incredibly proud of Dr. Kawas for the very well-deserved recognition.

Old News is Good News The 90+ Study

SEPTEMBER 2018. Vol. 9

MEET



Colette Aguirre, Zara Melikyan, Christina Whittle, and Jaime Demoss.

Our Neuropsychological Examiners

Christina, a Newport Beach native, has a BA degree in Combined Sciences, a gerontology certificate, and has worked with *The 90+ Study* since its inception in 2002. Getting to know the participants and their loved ones is her favorite part of the job. When not working, she enjoys adventures with her husband and four children, volunteering and making personal connections wherever she goes.

Jaime, originally from Northern California, earned her BA degree in Psychology. In 2005 she began working with *The 90+ Study*. Three years ago, Jaime and her husband relocated to Ojai but she continues to work with the study visiting our out-of-town participants.

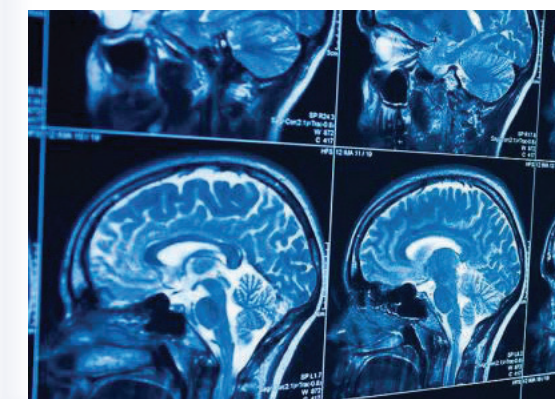
Colette has degrees in Cognitive Sciences and Film and Media Studies and has worked with *The 90+ Study* for 13 years. Currently, she is pursuing a Master's in Public Health while keeping busy with her husband and two little girls, aerial acrobatics and training for a half-marathon.

Zara earned her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology and in 2016 started work in *The 90+ Study*. In addition to seeing study participants, she studies the relationship of modifiable factors, such as sleep and physical activity, to cognition. She enjoys spending time with her family, traveling, photography, and exploring the wonders of California's nature.

A New Focus of The 90+ Study

Many of our oldest-old participants maintain cognitive performance as they age and do so despite having neuropathological abnormalities in the brain. Lifestyle, genetics, medical conditions, and other factors may play a role in this **cognitive resilience**. We will investigate this surprising finding over the next five years using state-of-the-art neuroimaging, neuropathology, and other methods. We hope these exciting new investigations will yield the secrets of successful aging in the oldest-old.

New Recruitment! With our renewed funding, we are excited to be recruiting new participants to join *The 90+ Study*. Please tell your relatives, neighbors, and friends to contact us if they are interested in being part of this landmark investigation. Our number is (949) 768-3635.



Clinic for Aging Research & Education, University of California, Irvine
24361 El Toro Road #150, Laguna Woods, CA 92637
949-768-3635 || study90@uci.edu || www.90study.org





Hellos and Goodbyes



Hello: We welcome four new members to *The 90+ Study* team.

- Natalie Bryant, B.S., is our new Programmer/Data Analyst and comes to us with over 20 years of experience in clinical trial data management and analysis. She will integrate and manage the voluminous data we collect as part of *The 90+ Study*.
- Maria Kirkwood, Administrative Specialist, has over 30 years of experience as an executive assistant. She will provide administrative support to the principal investigators of *The 90+ Study*.
- Miyoung Kim, M.D., is our newest neurological examiner and has experience performing physical and neurological exams in both the hospital and clinical setting. Before medical school, she was involved in neuroscience, neurology, and psychiatry research.

- S. Ahmad Sajjadi, M.D., Ph.D., is a UCI Assistant Professor of Neurology who comes to us from Cambridge, England. As a cognitive and behavioral neurologist he brings extensive experience in clinical research to our study. Dr. Sajjadi also has an interest in atypical dementias and neuroimaging.

Goodbye: We said goodbye to several important team members of *The 90+ Study*: Barbara Shah, neurological examiner; Sandy Pittman, administrative assistant; Shawna Perry, programmer and analyst; and Dr. Szofia Bullain, neurological examiner and co-investigator. We thank them for their important contributions to the study and wish them the best.

How you can Support the Study

Thank you to those who have made monetary donations to support our study. We especially thank Dr. Lorna Carlin who made a generous contribution of \$5,000 to our research. To make a tax-deductible contribution, please make your check payable to the UCI Foundation and write *The 90+ Study* in the “memo” section at the bottom left corner of your check. Any amount is appreciated and helps support our research.

Mail payments to:

Claudia Kawas, M.D.
1121 Gillespie NRF
University of California, Irvine
Irvine, CA 92697-4540
Attention: *The 90+ Study*

You can also donate online through our website www.90study.org. Click on the link: Donate to *The 90+ Study*.

Scientific Presentations

The *The 90+ Study* researchers continue to present new research findings at national and international conferences. Here we highlight four recent presentations:

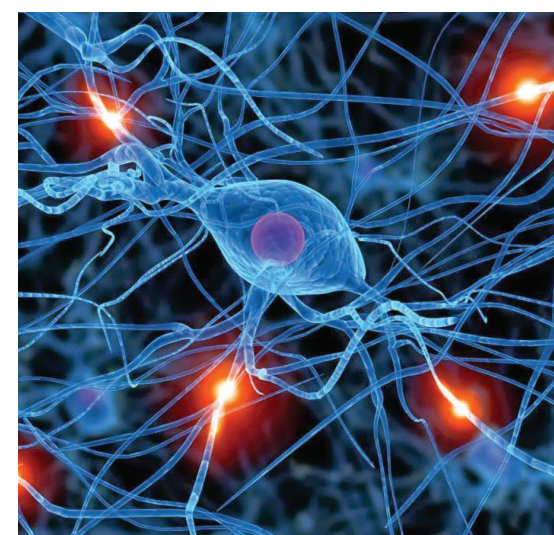
- **Exercise During Retirement Age Lowers Likelihood of Falls Decades Later:** Falls are extremely common and many lead to serious injury. In *The 90+ Study*, over half of participants reported falling in the previous year and 21% reported severe falls. Fallers were more likely to live alone, use an assistive device (cane or walker), and have certain medical conditions such as TIAs, depression, vision disease, and dementia. The good news was that if a person exercised 30+ minutes per day when they were in their 70s, they were less likely to fall decades later when aged 90+. *Annual American Neurological Association Meeting: Baltimore, MD.*

- **Amyloid Burden Does Not Differentiate Cognitive Status:** Levels of amyloid plaques (a protein common in the brains of people with Alzheimer’s disease) can be measured by PET scan. Although we previously thought that all people with this protein had problems with their thinking, analyses in *The 90+ Study* participants revealed that 40% of individuals without dementia have high levels of this protein and having it does not predict cognitive decline over the next few years. *Alzheimer’s Association International Conference: Toronto, Canada.*

- **24-Hour Ambulatory Blood Pressure and Cognitive Performance:** In healthy individuals blood pressure is naturally lower during nighttime. We studied whether this natural dipping in blood pressure at night was associated with cognitive performance. We found that greater nocturnal dipping was related to better scores in tests of language, memory, and visual spatial abilities. *International Stroke Conference: Los Angeles, CA.*

- **Impact of interventions to reduce Alzheimer’s disease pathology:** Many, and often multiple, brain abnormalities contribute to cognitive loss and dementia in individuals aged

90 years and older. These brain abnormalities include Alzheimer’s disease, hippocampal sclerosis, large and microscopic infarcts, and white matter disease. With information from *The 90+ Study*, we examined the impact in the general population if we were able to successfully treat and eliminate Alzheimer’s disease in all 90+ year olds. Successful treatment would eliminate approximately 50% of all cases of dementia in this age group, averting nearly 2.4 million cases by 2050. These studies show that successful treatments for Alzheimer’s disease will have huge public health impact, but treatments for other causes of dementia need to be developed. *Statistical Methods Conference on Aging & Dementia: Chicago, IL.*



Brain Donation Program

Researchers in *The 90+ Study* continue to recruit participants who are willing to donate their brain upon death. Although advances in brain imaging technology allow us to get a sneak preview of the brain, examining the tissue under the microscope remains our first and best choice.

With more than 500 participants, *The 90+ Study Brain Donation Program* is one of the largest brain repositories of people over the age of 90.

It is impossible to express the value of this donation from our study participants. Many of our most important and surprising findings have come from this program. Contributing to scientific research in this way will help future generations live longer and healthier lives, hopefully free from dementing disorders. Please call 949-768-3635 if you are interested in enrolling in our brain donation program.

