

Lifestyle, Culture, and Health Newsletter

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Let's Celebrate - Another Five Years!

Our proposal to the National Institutes of Health has been funded. The reviewers were so impressed with your contributions and our careful methods for developing knowledge, that they think we should continue learning together for another five years, 2012-2017. **We are celebrating your commitment to this important research.**

Your 'Ohana is growing each year, as many people unable to join us in the past are now completing surveys and the clinic visit. In our recent Kaua'i, Wai'anae, Big Island, and Maui initiatives alone, 90 people attended for total of 824 clinic visits overall among 1386 members (60% participating).

Your parents have been equally generous. 277 have joined the project to provide information about your earliest years. We are especially grateful for their contributions to our understanding of your growth and development as a child.



Research Staff at Dole
Matt, Melody, Joan, Cris, Darlene, Amy

10-Year Follow-up

We can scarcely believe that we began seeing members for the clinic visit 10 years ago. Upon leaving the clinic, many folks have asked "When can I come again?" If you completed your first clinic visit during the years 2002-2007, **at your 10-year anniversary** we will be inviting you back for a follow-up clinic visit.

Good News

We will continue to welcome members joining us for their **first clinic visit**. Both first-time and follow-up visitors will receive \$150/\$300 (O'ahu/Non-O'ahu).



'Ohe'o Pools, Hana, Maui

Why am I in this Study?

Jack Digman, Ph.D., gathered information on your group during the years 1959 to 1967. He was studying behavioral descriptions of children. He obtained permission to gather data at the UH Lab School, O'ahu and Kaua'i public schools, and in parochial schools on Kaua'i. Whole classes in participating schools were included. Teachers described their students on behavioral characteristics at the end of the year. You will not remember participating because permissions were handled at the administrative level in those days. Jack's original work bloomed into an important field of investigation and, after 40 years at UH, Jack retired to Oregon where he continued his passion for research at the Oregon Research Institute. At age 73, he was funded by the National Institutes of Health to follow-up his earlier study. Jack died in 1998. We cherish his legacy as we strive to continue his work. For this reason we deeply appreciate the contribution of each participant. **You are our teachers regarding lifestyle and cultural effects on health and we hope that together we will create results important for future generations.** Your group is unique in all the world (2418 participants) with your cultural diversity and the excellent data gathered in childhood. If we miss this opportunity to work together as a team, we will miss entirely the chance to achieve this goal. Together we are proud that this locally generated and managed project has been validated four times over twenty years by federal grants from the National Institutes of Health.



Photo: Ron Dahlquist

10-Year Follow-up Why Bother?

We have spent 10 years together in this research project. We have all changed and grown during this time. Are we wiser, more or less flexible, or healthier? What is our work situation and has our family life changed? How are we handling stress? All of these questions ask about change over time and some of them may relate to our health status now and in the future.

In the follow-up years, we will be asking about change in your lives by survey (one per year) and we plan to compare clinic visit results to learn more about lifestyle and health changes over 10 years.

New Directions in Follow-up

We have discovered that personality characteristics such as conscientiousness relate to better health at mid-life. Now we would like to know more about the underlying mechanisms that make this possible.

For example, we know that stress affects health over time for some people. If we could learn more about personality and stress management, maybe we could develop ways to help folks successfully manage their stress and reduce their risk for chronic illness.

In order to better understand how personality and health are related, we will be studying the underlying roles of mental flexibility, vitamin D, life changes, a stress hormone (cortisol), and the social support of friends and family over time. Our interview and lab activities will be similar to the first clinic visit; however, everyone will be happy to know that there will be only one blood draw instead of two and no sugar drink required.

New Results

We often hear that early education and good schools are important for our children. We understand that a basic skill-set is needed for employment and self-sufficiency in life.

But how often do we think about the links between education and health at mid-life? Drawing on the information you have shared through surveys and the clinic visits, we have been exploring this topic.

You may remember rating your health on surveys from Poor to Excellent on a five point scale. We found that this self-rated health varied at mid-life by cultural group and the resources available to individuals, including employment and education. Groups with access to the fewest resources report poorer health and greater exposure to traumatic events during their lifetime than groups with greater access to resources.

We discovered similar results with body size, an important health indicator at mid-life because the heaviest individuals are at risk for chronic diseases such as diabetes, or blood pressure and heart problems.

Access to education and employment were more important than ancestry in predicting normal weight vs. obesity at mid-life, especially among Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders.

These results confirm education's far reaching effects in our members' lives by opening doors to employment and other important resources. We conclude that improving early and continuing education for everyone and creating programs sensitive to cultural differences are vital in promoting health and preventing chronic disease in mid-life.



Preparing for the 10-year visit



Welcome David



David Y. Hsiao, B.S., has joined us as a Programmer Analyst III. He is hard at work managing our data and creating new options to make our work flow more efficiently. We are very grateful for his expertise and his kind patience with us in our technical needs.



Aloha Melody

After nine years of outstanding work with our team, **Melody Joy S. Fo, M.A.**, began her internship in clinical psychology at the University of California at Davis in August 2012. This is a requirement of her doctorate work at Argosy University. We are happy for Melody as she continues with her professional development, even as we will miss her presence every day. Best wishes!

Lifestyle, Culture, and Health Project

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