



# Lifestyle, Culture, and Health Newsletter

Volume 6, Issue 1

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## ***Aloha!***

Have we told you lately how much we appreciate you? Your participation over the years has taught us so much, and we want to thank you again for the valuable gift of your time and for all of the meaningful things about yourself that you have shared with us. We are currently creating our 10th questionnaire, which will be mailed out later this summer. In the meantime we are still conducting telephone interviews, and brainstorming some ideas for safe clinic visits, either in person or via telehealth.

From time to time we ask you for your comments and suggestions. We read them carefully and we learn about your experiences. Whether it is with our interviewing styles, or how we schedule your appointments, your feedback guides us. Your comments and suggestions are really important to us. They help us to get to know you better, and they help us to know how we can make your experiences with us even better.

In this newsletter we will answer some questions that you have asked us, and provide you with some interesting facts about the study as a whole. We have even added some corny jokes and brain teasers. We would also like to send you a gift card as a small token of our gratitude.

### **How to get a gift card:**

You can choose a gift card from Starbucks, Subway, Amazon, or Longs Drug/CVS by going to our webpage at <http://lifestyleculturehealth.ori.org> or by contacting the **Lifestyle, Culture, and Health Project** by phone: On O'ahu (808) 432-4688. Elsewhere toll-free (800) 833-5006.

# Introductions

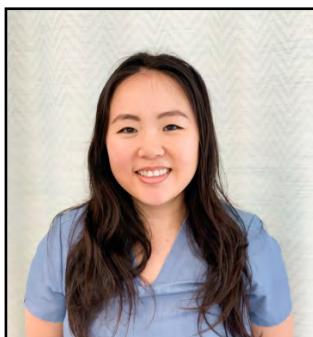
Here are a few new faces that have been added to the Lifestyle, Culture, and Health Team.



Olena Pishchalenko, BS, has joined the LCH team as a recruiter/ interviewer. Olena has a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychobiology. She enjoys connecting with participants through Telephone Interviews. In her spare time, Olena likes to cook with friends and family, and go on long walks with her dog, Biscuit.



Katie Clawson, B.A., joined the LCH team as Project Manager. Katie has worked at the Oregon Research Institute since 2000 on tobacco cessation grants. She lives in Eugene Oregon with her husband, 2 kids, and dog, Tucker. Katie enjoys, tennis, skiing, quilting, and traveling with her family, especially to Hawaii.



Lisa Kim, RN, joined the LCH team as a nurse. She conducts clinic visits and reviews lab data. She earned her Bachelor's Degree in Nursing and has 10 years of bedside patient care. Her hobbies include traveling, reading, and an active lifestyle.



Missy Peterson, MA, has worked at the Oregon Research Institute since 1998 as a data analyst. She has her Master's Degree in Sociology, with her emphasis in research methods. Prior to joining the LCH team, she worked on an 18-year longitudinal study, following kids from the 1st grade into their twenties. She lives in Central Oregon and loves mountain biking, snowboarding, birdwatching, and hiking with her dog, Ellie. If you look close in the photo, you can see Ellie peeking over her shoulder.

# Tennis Shoes and Telomeres

What do tennis shoes and telomeres have in common?

From time to time we invite you in for a clinic visit. During these clinic visits, you do things like show us the pace of your walk, show us how far you can reach while sitting, recall words from a list, and tell us about your health and sun exposure. We collect information about your blood pressure, height, and weight, and we ask you about your health



and how you are doing physically. We also ask if we can draw your blood, which gives us lots of useful information, including your cholesterol readings, blood sugar, vitamin D, and other important markers of your health. We consult with experts, and use these measures, or markers, to find new ways to understand how you are aging. In some cases, we find ways to combine these markers to study things like metabolism and heart health. We are also always looking for new ways to understand aging, and this is why we are so excited to be able to get telomeres from your blood samples.

**What are telomeres and what do they have in common with tennis shoes?** Telomeres are part of our DNA. Like the plastic caps, or aglets, on our tennis shoe shoelaces, they protect our DNA strands from becoming frayed and sticking together. They also help to make sure that our DNA information gets copied correctly every time our cells divide. Our cells are constantly replenishing by dividing and copying themselves. Our telomeres make sure that our DNA stays intact during this process, but they also become shorter each time our cells divide. That is why we think that telomere length can tell us something about aging. The shorter the telomere, the older we are “biologically”. Besides the normal process of aging, scientists also think that our telomeres can be shortened by things like stress, diet, lack of exercise, and obesity. However, the good news is that we may be able to protect our telomeres by exercising and eating healthy diets. Our research is helping to find out how! One thing we are currently looking at is the change in your telomere length from ages 50 to 60. If you are interested about learning more about some of our other research that has looked at telomeres, please go to <http://lifestyleculturehealth.ori.org> and click on the “results and publications” tab.

# About You

Some of you have asked about how many others have participated in the study throughout the years.

This is a great question and we are happy to answer it because your participation is so important to us!

Since the time you have rejoined the study as adults, there have been many chances to participate. To date there have been 9 questionnaires, 2 rounds of clinic visits and a couple of telephone phone interviews. Since the second clinic visit and telephone phone interviews are still in progress, we will just look at 10 timepoints. Has anyone completed all 9 questionnaires and the first clinic visit? Yes! Fifteen percent of you have! That is amazing! But more than half of you have participated in at least 6 timepoints, and there are still so many opportunities coming up!

Many of you are interested in what the study is learning about your memory, what you can do to take control of your brain health, and if we can give you copies of the activities we have asked you to do at the clinic?

While we can't give you copies of the activities, or provide you with individual results (since it might bias the research), we can tell you that keeping active and staying connected with family and friends is important.

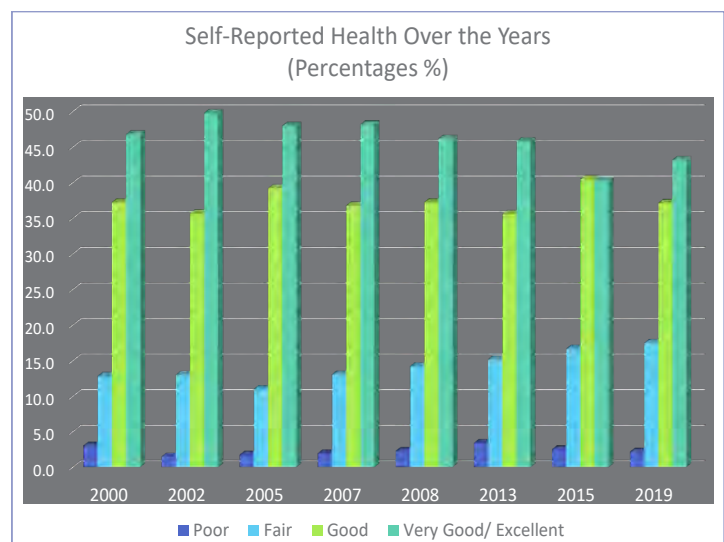
What we can also tell you is that your scores are very comparable to the scores of others in your same age range who are participating in similar studies of aging around the world.



Another popular question has been your concern with how your age cohort is doing. Are people healthy? Are people active?

Another great question!

So how do we measure this? One thing we do is ask you how you think you are doing, compared to other people of your same sex and age. We ask you this question on almost every questionnaire. It gives us a way to “map” all of your data over the years. The more times you participate, the more dots we have to connect! Below is a graph plotting all of your responses to this question. This shows that even though we are all aging, the general report of our groups health is staying pretty much the same, with the largest majority reporting “very good or excellent health”.



# More About You

Here are some interesting things that we have learned about you from your last clinic visit and questionnaire.

## Men Averages

Age: 60.3  
 Height: 5'8"  
 BMI: 29.0  
 Blood pressure: 128/77  
 Cholesterol: 190.8



## Women Averages

Age: 59.8  
 Height: 5'2"  
 BMI: 27.8  
 Blood pressure: 126/75  
 Cholesterol: 209.62

Also from the last questionnaire:

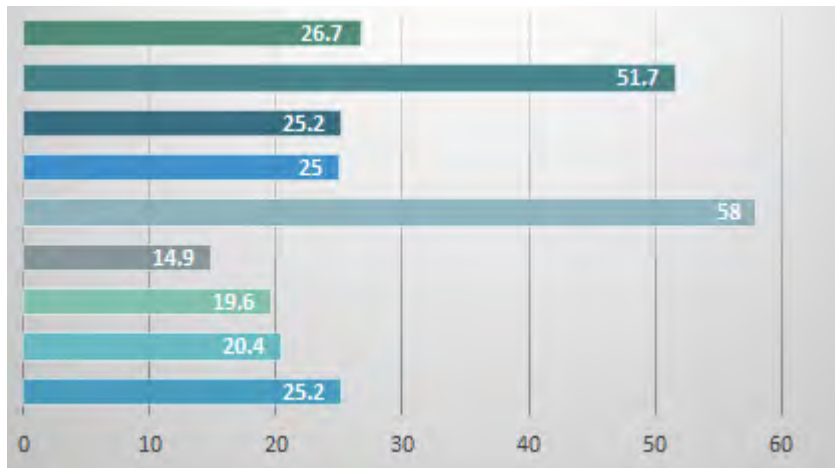
80% of you reported doing moderate exercise at least 1 or 2 times a week.

50% of you reported doing strenuous exercise at least 1 or 2 times a week.

When asked the question, "How well would you rate your memory today **compared to 5 years ago?**" (On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being "improved a lot" and 5 being "gotten worse"), the average score for your group was 2.92. This score is very close to the middle of the scale, and seems to be saying that you don't believe that your memory has changed much in the last 5 years. In fact some (31.5%) of you have even reported that it seems to have improved! When asked to rate your memory **compared to other people your age**, 45.5% of you gave your memory a high rating.

In the last questionnaire we asked you how often you do certain activities. Some of the most popular activities are shown in the graph below. These are things that you do at least monthly. For example, 14.9% of you practice a musical instrument at least monthly, while an even larger percentage of you like to discuss politics (51.7%) monthly.

Serving on a committee .....  
 Discussing politics .....  
 Working as a volunteer .....  
 Participating in club activities...  
 Reading .....  
 Practicing a musical instrument  
 Sketching, drawing, painting ...  
 Doing crossword puzzles .....  
 Solving math or chess puzzles..



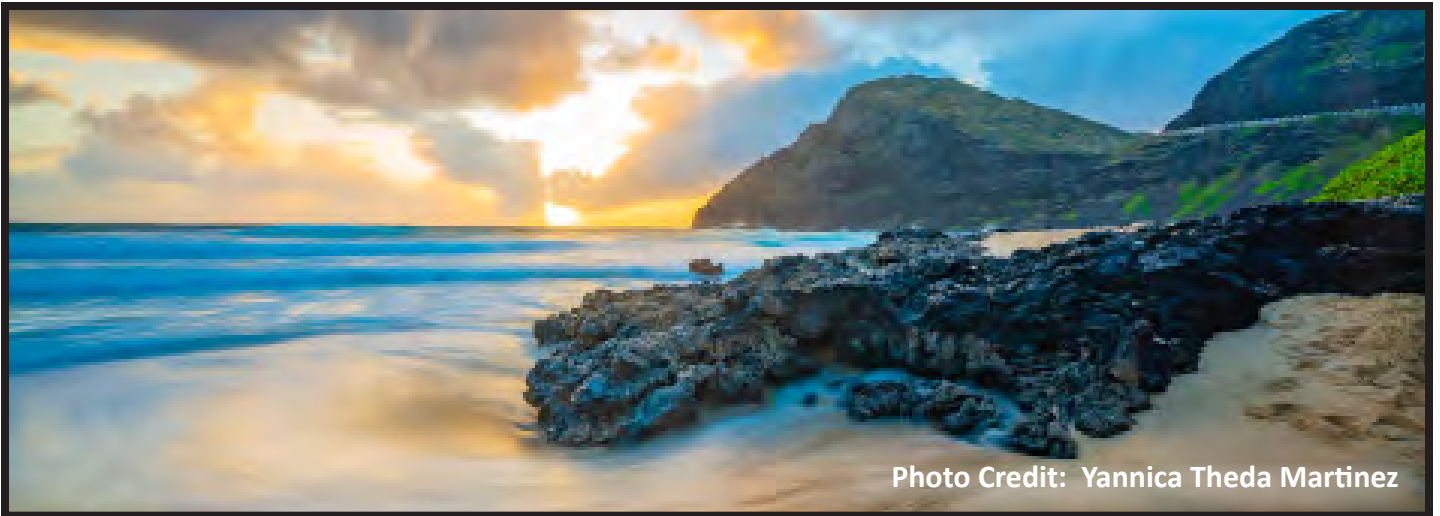


Photo Credit: Yannica Theda Martinez

### Jokes

How do trees get online?

*-They just log in.*

What did the ocean say to the shore?

*-Nothing, it just waved!*

### Brainteasers

*What is unusual about the following words:  
revive, banana, grammar, voodoo, assess,  
potato, dresser, uneven?*

*How many 3¢ stamps are in a dozen?  
(Look for the answers of these brainteasers on our  
website)*

