

# Lifestyle, Culture, and Health Newsletter

Volume 7, Issue 1

Fall 2021



## ***Aloha!***

Much has happened in the world since our last Newsletter went out to you. One thing that hasn't changed is our commitment to you and the Hawai'i project. In the last few months, you may have received a mailed questionnaire. We have already had such a great response from you! ***We want you to know that it is not too late to send in this questionnaire!*** The questionnaire can be filled out on paper or completed online. Please contact us if you have any questions or need a new questionnaire mailed to you.

We appreciate the time that you have taken to complete this survey and your opinions and information is always so important to us. Some of you have also been participating in the telephone interviews. Since we are not doing clinic interviews at this point, these telephone interviews have been so invaluable to us because it has allowed us to talk to you, and touch base and still feel connected to you during these times when we have been more at home and not going out as much. We have really enjoyed being able to continue our research, and to feel connected with this LCH community.

In this newsletter, we will tell you about some of the things that we have been looking at and learning from you! We will also tell you a few silly jokes and give you a few brainteasers to work on.

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### **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.

Oregon Research Institute toll-free (800) 261-4997 x 2286.

# A Sense of Purpose

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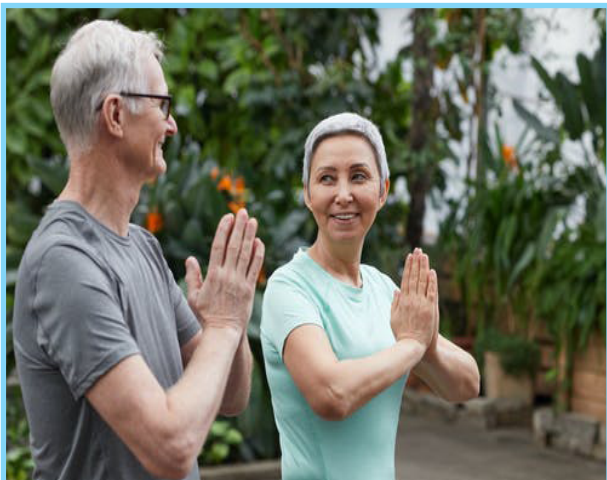


Have you ever wondered about your direction in life? Or realized that certain activities are more engaging and meaningful than others? Then you have already been thinking about purpose in life, a new focus of the Hawai'i study.

Having a sense of purpose involves recognizing you have a direction that guides you from one day to the next, something that you find to be “truly you” and your guiding aim for life. People can find sense of purpose through lots of different activities, and you don’t need to have anything big or bold that guides you.

Why are we so interested in examining sense of purpose? Well, it appears to be a major factor in promoting healthy aging. Research performed by Hawai'i project investigators shows that purposeful individuals tend to eat healthier, exhibit better memory skills, report lower levels of depression and anxiety, and even live longer lives. The good news is that research even shows that Hawai'i citizens may even be more purposeful than residents of other states!

So the next time you find yourself thinking about your direction in life, or what goal or goals are guiding you in your activities, know that you are engaging in a process that people have been recommending since the early Greek philosophers. And one that appears widely beneficial in promoting health aging.



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Written by Patrick Hill, Ph.D.

Publication: A purposeful lifestyle is a healthful lifestyle: Linking sense of purpose to self-rated health through multiple health behaviors. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 24(10), 1392-1400 (2019).



# Sunshine, Salmon, Supplements . . .

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What do these three items have in common? *Did what are sources of vitamin D come to mind?* Then yes, you are correct. Although they are main sources of vitamin D, they may not contribute equally to your serum vitamin D levels (levels in the blood) due to many factors. For example, length of sun exposure and sunscreen use, skin pigmentation, and aging, may lower our skin's ability to adequately produce vitamin D.

Vitamin D is important for calcium absorption in the gut, bone growth, and support other roles such as neuromuscular and immune function. Vitamin D can be produced in our skin through sun exposure, obtained through consuming natural foods such as fatty fish (e.g, salmon and tuna), fortified sources (e.g., milk and orange juice), and vitamin supplements. We recently investigated how these sources of vitamin D contribute to serum vitamin D levels through a combination of measures gathered at the LCH clinic visit and through a questionnaire.

Over 200 LCH study participants had both a blood sample from the clinic visit and completed the food frequency questionnaire. Over 1/3 of these participants were vitamin D deficient/insufficient, despite most of the participants were living in Hawai'i with year-round access to sun as a vitamin D source. In comparison this is much lower than the national average of 77% not meeting sufficient vitamin D levels. Furthermore, sun exposure and supplement use, but not food intake, were factors that determined the highest levels of serum vitamin D. A higher body mass index and being Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander were other factors related to lower serum vitamin D levels. Study participants with vitamin D levels of concern were notified by our Research Nurse who facilitated follow-up discussion with their primary care provider.

Older adults may spend less time outdoors, have less than optimal skin synthesis of vitamin D, reduced absorption of vitamin D from food sources and a limited dietary quality or intake of a variety of foods. Having access to abundant sun exposure alone may not be enough to support optimal vitamin D levels, and supplementation may be needed in some, in order to offset the limited contribution from sun exposure and dietary sources of vitamin D.

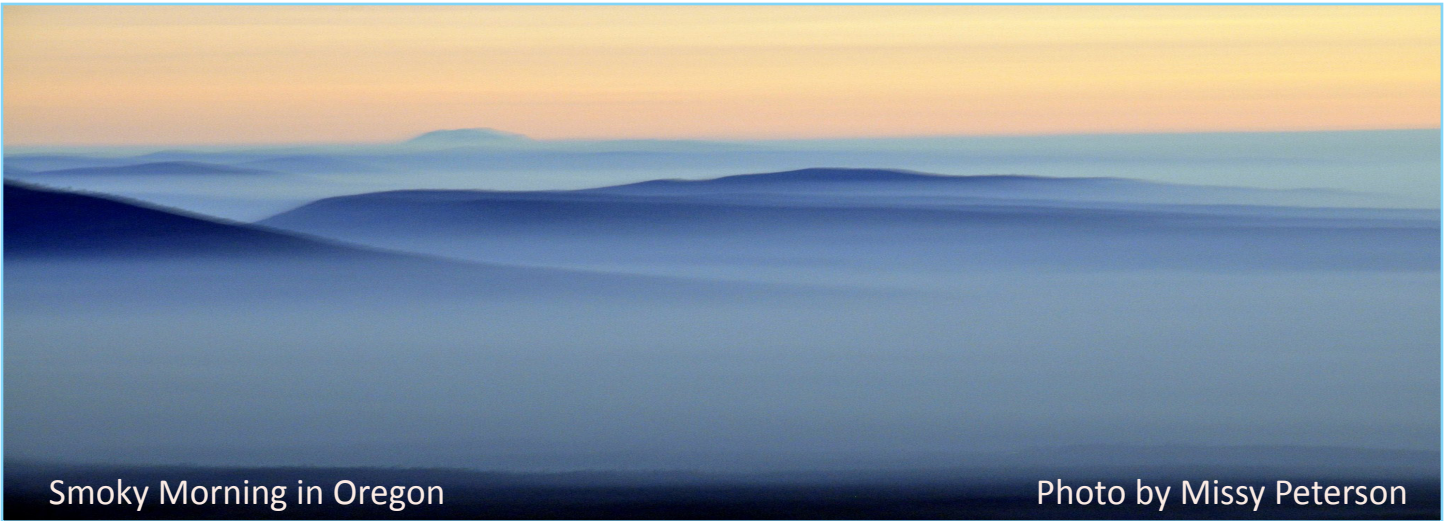
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Written by Caryn E Oshiro, Ph.D.

Publication: Vitamin D deficiency and insufficiency in Hawai'i: Levels and sources of serum vitamin D in older adults. American Journal of Human Biology. 02 July 2021







Smoky Morning in Oregon

Photo by Missy Peterson

### Jokes

A beekeeper orders 12 special honeybees. When they arrive he finds that he has been sent 13 bees. He immediately calls to report the error. But is told that there is no mistake... that the extra bee is a freebie!



### Brainteasers

*What word becomes plural when an "s" is added, but singular again by adding another "s"?*

*What can travel all around the world without leaving it's corner?*

*(Look for the answers of these brainteasers, and see even more brainteaser and jokes, on our website)*

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