

## MEET

# Farah Mozaffar and Barbara Shah



**B**oth Farah Mozaffar, MS, MD, and Barbara Shah, MSN, NP-BC, have been with *The 90+ Study* since its inception in 2003. Originally from Pakistan, Farah completed her medical studies at the Sindh Medical College (Karachi University) and then worked as an internist with burn patients. She recently completed a master's degree in Biomedical and Translational Sciences from UC Irvine. Married with three children, Farah lives in Irvine. She has volunteered at her children's school for many years and likes traveling, reading, and cooking.

Barbara, a family nurse practitioner, is currently studying to earn a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree from the California State University Consortium Program. Before joining the staff of *The 90+ Study*, she worked with the Alzheimer's Disease Research Center at the University of Southern California and in research of acute traumatic brain and spinal cord injury and rehabilitation. Married with three grown children and a dog named Charlie, Barbara lives in Lake Forest and loves to travel with her husband.

## Scientific Presentations

**T**his year *The 90+ Study* researchers presented findings at several national and international conferences.

### • Cholesterol, Statins and Risk of Dementia

A history of high cholesterol and taking cholesterol-lowering medications (statins) are associated with a decreased dementia risk. Statins may protect against dementia by preventing strokes or decreasing the production of amyloid (a protein that accumulates in Alzheimer's disease).

### • Microinfarcts, Tangles and Dementia

Both neurofibrillary tangles (a hallmark pathology of Alzheimer's disease) and microinfarcts seem to

contribute similarly to dementia risk in the oldest-old. Previously considered too small to matter but common in brains of the oldest-old, microinfarcts warrant greater attention.

### • Florbetapir-PET Amyloid Imaging and Cognitive Decline

At one year of follow-up, participants with a high amyloid burden showed a somewhat faster rate of decline in cognitive tests than those with no amyloid burden. As in younger elderly, a high burden may aid in identifying oldest-old individuals at risk for cognitive decline.

### • Blood Pressure and Dementia

Hypertension in the oldest-old is related to a reduced risk of dementia. Higher blood pressure may be necessary to maintain adequate blood flow and oxygenation to the brain of the very elderly.

### • Small-vessel Cerebrovascular Pathology and Poor Physical Performance

Those with small or microscopic strokes on autopsy were more likely to have poor physical performance. This was observed primarily in balance and walking.

# Hellos and Goodbyes

In January we welcomed Shawna Perry, MS, as our new statistician. Shawna graduated from the Statistics Master's Program at UC Irvine in December 2013. She will manage and analyze data, as well as write manuscripts with her colleagues for publication in scientific journals. A native Californian from the Central Coast, Shawna loves the outdoors and animals and now enjoys exploring and hiking in Southern California.



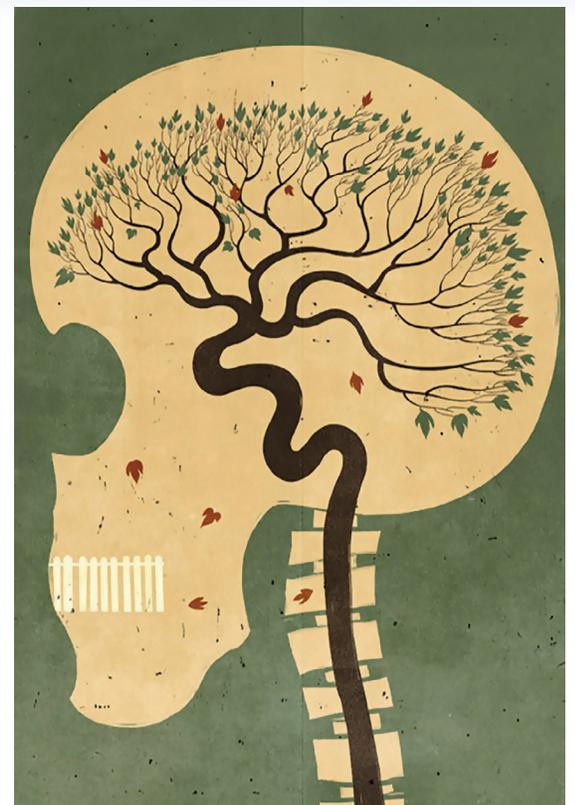
Beverly Ducey and Marian Hawk were pioneers with *The 90+ Study*. Mrs. Ducey worked on the study for ten years as our participant recruiter. For many years, Mrs. Hawk worked as a telephone interviewer. Both were instrumental in establishing a sound foundation for this research study by tracking down Leisure World Cohort members from across the country and recruiting them for *The 90+ Study*. With a “can-do” attitude, they found and recruited over 85% of the original cohort members. We are thankful to both.

## Brain Tissue Donation

Researchers in *The 90+ Study* continue to recruit participants who are willing to donate their brain upon death. Advances in technology such as PET imaging give us a sneak preview of what is inside the brain, but examining brain tissue under the microscope remains our first choice.

*The 90+ Study Brain Donation Program* is one of the largest brain banks of people over the age of 90. Out of 330 enrolled participants from across the country, more than 240 have come to autopsy.

With this invaluable donation from our study participants, we continue to learn much about the secrets of successful aging. This will aid future generations to live longer and healthier lives, possibly free from dementing disorders. To enroll in our autopsy program, please call (949) 768-3635.



# Our New Focus

Last year *The 90+ Study* received funding from the National Institute on Aging for another five years. With a new focus on neuroimaging of the brain and the relationship of blood pressure and oxygen saturation to cognition, we are asking for additional volunteers. This new research includes FDA-approved brain PET and MRI scans and brain donation upon death. Although we have over 60 participants who have volunteered, we need many more to answer our scientific questions. To volunteer, please call (949) 768-3635.

## Kudos Korner Bob Christians



## How You Can Support the Study



Thank you to those who have contributed cash donations to our study. Any amount is appreciated and helps support 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.

### Mail payments to:

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

You can also donate online through our website [www.90study.org](http://www.90study.org). Click on the link: Donate to *The 90+ Study*, or call us at (949) 768-3635.

When Bob was asked why he joined *The 90+ Study* he replied: “I wanted to do something challenging.” Now 98, Bob joined the study at age 90, has been seen every 6 months, has done PET scans, has worn a 24-hour blood pressure monitor and pulse oximeter, and is a brain donor.

The year was 1936 when Bob’s skill as a competitive swimmer at The University of Iowa helped Iowa claim its first Big Ten Championship in swimming. “Swimming requires coordination of so many parts of the body that it’s a lot for the brain to keep up with.” He believes his observations and experiments with freestyle techniques have resulted in what is known today as the “catch-up drill”.

A navy pilot for 23 years, Bob vividly recalls Pearl Harbor and, in the European front, was instrumental in rescuing 25 Dutchmen. After the navy, he worked for Hewlett Packard in Silicon Valley. Passionate about music, he has been playing the piano since age 9. A song writer and composer, he plays every day.

What are Bob’s secrets to longevity? “Do your own bills and shopping, understand yourself better, know your body, and do what you can to feel good. Keep your mind active.” Would he encourage others to join *The 90+ Study*? Yes! He says it is very gratifying knowing that you can do something to help science.



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# Old News is Good News

*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.*

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## 60 MINUTES "Living to 90 and Beyond"



**T**he 90+ Study was featured this spring, and again this summer, on "60 Minutes" with correspondent Leslie Stahl. "Living to 90 and Beyond" highlighted *The 90+ Study* participants showing them in their daily lives: exercising, swimming, playing cards, dancing, and enjoying life.

CBS News contacted us to do a story about this fascinating group, the oldest-old, who represent the fastest growing

segment of the population. Our ground-breaking research provides clues about what it takes to live beyond age 90 and what we can expect in our later years. This research would not be possible without the 1,650 dedicated participants and their families.

To view the video go to our website: [www.90study.org](http://www.90study.org) and click on the link: **90+ Study on 60 Minutes**.