

According to Montez, the best part about her job is having the opportunity to interact with participants' and their families on a daily basis



Niguel Assisted Living Facility. Montez joined the staff of *The 90+ Study* in 2004.

Montez's involvement with *The 90+ Study* includes administrative tasks such as managing *The 90+ Autopsy Study*, coordinating participant visits, and organizing the annual appreciation luncheon. She is the welcoming voice that answers the phone and the friendly face that greets participants and their families at the CARE Clinic. While many of our participants live in Laguna Woods and other parts of Orange County, many live far from the CARE clinic. Montez coordinates the travel of neurological examiners and neuropsychological testers for these visits across 36 US states and Puerto Rico. She also organizes the annual appreciation

Meet Montez Hester, B.S.

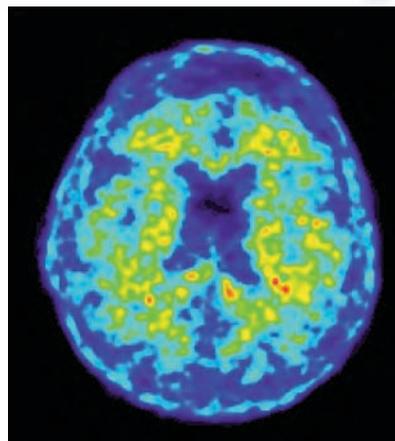
Montez Hester is the Clinical Research Coordinator and Office Manager at the Clinic for Research and Education (CARE) in Laguna Woods. Born and reared in Alabama, Montez completed her undergraduate studies in business at the University of North Alabama. She moved to Orange County in 2003 from Dallas with the intention of working in a field in which she could help elderly people. She worked at the Financial Aid Office for the School of Medicine at the University of California, Irvine, while working part-time as a concierge for Aegis of Laguna

luncheon for *The 90+ Study* participants and their families including the fantastic door prizes, delicious meals catered by Jolanda, and special awards given to study participants. According to Montez, the best part about her job is having the opportunity to interact with participants and their families on a daily basis.

In her spare time, Montez spends time with her friends, family, and two cats – Zacky and Ashley. Her hobbies include watching movies, reading, and taking dance classes.

The Avid Study

In our last newsletter we highlighted the Avid PET imaging study. Several *90+ Study* participants joined this clinical trial to test a new tracing compound that may be able to identify amyloid brain plaques, which are associated with Alzheimer's disease, before people develop cognitive impairment. Subjects underwent a PET Scan (Positron Emission Tomography) and the images were related to results of their neuropsychological tests.



Preliminary data analysis suggests that oldest-old participants without dementia who have more amyloid in their brain have greater memory loss. The FDA is considering if this test can be used in the clinic to help diagnose Alzheimer's disease. Results from this project will be presented in the fall at the 136th Annual American Neurological Association meeting in San Diego, California. Many thanks to *The 90+ Study* participants who helped us with this important research.



Hello's & Good-Byes

Dr. Dan Berlau is an astute scientist who worked on *The 90+ Study* for five years, first as a postdoctoral fellow and then as a co-investigator, and authored several publications. Many of you will remember him as the talented and energetic Master of Ceremonies at our Appreciation Luncheons. We wish Dan Berlau, PhD, Assistant Adjunct Professor, good luck as he moves to a faculty position at Regis University, School of Pharmacy in Denver, Colorado.



We welcome Szofia Bullain, MD as our new postdoctoral fellow. She will begin working with us at *The 90+ Study* this September. Dr. Bullain graduated from the Department of Neurology Residency Program at the University of California, Irvine this past June. As a neurologist and a member of our scientific team, Dr. Bullain will perform neurological exams and take the lead on various research projects. Many of you will meet Dr. Bullain during your semi-annual visits.



Updates from The 90+ Study Brain Donation Program

*T*he researchers at *The 90+ Study* are continuously examining how the brains of participants relate to their memory and thinking abilities when they were alive. Because the best way to understand the aging process and disease involves looking at the brain under the microscope, brain donation enables the donors to continue to contribute to research.

The 90+ Study Brain Donation Program is one of the largest brain donation programs of people in their nineties and beyond. Over 270 participants across the country have enrolled and more than 160 brain autopsies have been performed.

We have learned many important things from studying the brains of our participants. Many seniors have the



neuropathological lesions typically found in the brains of people with Alzheimer's disease but they are able to maintain their memory and thinking abilities. In addition, about a quarter of our participants who died with dementia do not have any neuropathological lesions to account for their dementia.

We are collaborating with several research institutions across the country to continue learning about the brains of our oldest-old citizens. If we can understand how some people with brain abnormalities make it to age 90 and older dementia-free, whereas others suffer through memory loss for decades, we may be able to help those afflicted.

American Academy of Neurology, April 2011

Scientific Presentations

The American Academy of Neurology held their 63rd Annual Meeting in Honolulu, Hawaii. Four projects from *The 90+ Study* were selected by the organizers to be presented at the scientific sessions. Topics included:

1. Alzheimer's Pathology and Dementia in Centenarians: Results from *The 90+ Study*. With 34 study participants aged 100 years and older, we are learning important clues about dementia and successful aging in the oldest-old.



Dr. Mozaffar tests the balance of a study participant

2. Cerebral amyloid angiopathy is associated with APOE4 and CERAD plaque staging but not clinical dementia in the oldest-old. People in their 90s may be protected from many of the brain disorders that typically plague the elderly. We are working to understand better the reasons why. (Please see Brain donation feature)

3. Poor physical performance is associated with dementia in the oldest-old. Poor physical performance, such as slow walking, poor balance, and weak grip strength, at the first visit was associated with a greater risk of dementia in 90 year-olds. We are now developing studies to see if we can reduce this risk with exercise. (Please see Stay Positive feature)

4. Neuropsychological predictors of dementia in normal and cognitively impaired oldest-old. Participants from *The 90+ Study* complete a wide variety of cognitive tests that evaluate memory, language, and other abilities. Poor performance on these memory tests appears to be the best way to predict future dementia in the oldest-old.

How to Donate to Support the Study

If you wish to support *The 90+ Study*, please send your tax-deductible contributions to the address below. Make your check payable to the "UCI Foundation" and write "*The 90+ Study*" in the bottom left memo/for section of your check. For more details on how to make a donation, please contact us at the Clinic for Aging Research and Education by calling 949-768-3635.

Mail payments to:
Claudia Kawas, M.D.
1121 Gillespie
University of California, Irvine
Irvine, CA 92697-4550
Attention: *The 90+ Study*



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

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

Return Service Requested

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 family as well as members of the Leisure World Cohort.*

SEPTEMBER, 2011. VOL. 6

Stay Positive!



The 90+ Study is looking at ways to help people over 90 stay disability free. Disability is having difficulty with tasks such as dressing, bathing, getting in and out of a chair, walking, and feeding oneself. We recently examined whether keeping a positive attitude could help people stay active and without disability.

Participants who reported they had above average quality of life were more than **50% less likely** to become disabled in the next few years. And it is not only a positive attitude that can help you stay disability free – we also found that talking to friends and family at least once a week on the phone or in person also reduced one’s risk of disability by over 50%!

Bottom line: Keeping a positive attitude and staying in touch with loved ones is a great way to stay healthy.