

The WIHS Woman

The Connie Wofsy Women's HIV Study



**HAPPY
NEW YEAR !**



FELIZ ANO NUEVO
(SPANISH)

HAUOLI MAKAHIKI HOU
(HAWAIIAN)

PROSIT NEUJAHR
(GERMAN)

L'SHANNAH TOVAH (HEBREW)

FELICE ANNO NUOVO (ITALIAN)

FELIZ ANO NOVO (PORTUGUESE)

MANIGONG BAGONG TAON (FILIPINO)

BONNE ANNEE (French)

SUBHA ALUTH AWRUDHAK VEWA
(SINGHALESE)

GUNG HAY FAT CHOY (CHINESE)

ANTUM SALIMOUN (ARABIC)

CHUC MUNQ TAN NIEN (VIETNAMESE)

FROM THE EDITORS AND ALL THE STAFF
AT WIHS WE WISH YOU BEST OF 2003!!



BEST WISHES

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December Holidays

The month of December not only brings in the winter season but a time when family and friends get together to celebrate the holiday season. The descriptions below will give you a brief history of some of the holidays we celebrate in December. Happy Holidays to you and your loved ones.

Christmas

In the Seventeenth century the Puritans did not celebrate Christmas. December 25 was a workday. In the late 1700's, Christmas was once again a happy holiday. The Colonists decorated their fireplaces with greenery, sung carols, and feasted. No one, however, had a Christmas tree.

In 1823, Clement Moore wrote the poem "A Visit From St. Nicholas." Saint Nicholas or Santa Claus began to play a big part in the celebration of Christmas.

In the 1840's, German immigrants introduced the Christmas tree, which has become a major part of the Christmas tradition. In the 1890's, Victorians decorated their trees and homes with lots of lace, flowers, and glass ornaments. Sending Christmas cards became popular during this time.

Today, we combine old and new traditions to celebrate Christmas in a way that is meaningful to our family and friends.



Hanukah

The origins of Hanukah or the Festival of Lights are an event that happened 200 years before the birth of Christ. A king named Antiochus attempted to have all Jewish persons under his reign to follow the Greek religion. Under the leadership of Judah Maccabee, there was a rebellion. After three years of fighting, the Maccabees drove the Greek soldiers away. The Maccabees wanted to rededicate the temple, but were only able to find enough oil for one day. Miraculously, the oil lasted eight days; long enough to make new oil.

An important part of the Hanukah celebration is the menorah. This is a candleholder with eight candles and a shamash or servant candle. One candle is lit by the shamash for each of the night of Hanukah. After the lighting of the candles, people give gifts to one another. People sing and make merry. A popular food for Hanukah is potato pancakes, or latkes, cooked in oil in honor of the miracle.

Children enjoy playing the dreidel game. This is a top game played with nuts or gold-covered chocolate coins. There are four letters of the top which stand for nun, gimme, hay, and shin and give the directions for what to give or take during the game. The letters also stand for "nes gadol hayah sham" or "a great miracle happened there."



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Kwanzaa

Kwanzaa is an African-American holiday created in 1966. It begins on December 26 and lasts through January 1. The name Kwanzaa comes from the language of Swahili and means first fruits of the harvest.

To prepare for the holiday, families decorate their homes with Kwanzaa symbols. They place a mkeka, a straw mat, on the table. Corn (one ear for each child in the family) and other foods are placed on the mkeka to remember the earth's abundance.

Candles are placed in a kinara, a wooden candle holder. A black candle is placed in the center as a reminder of the richness of African-American skin. Three red candles represent struggles and three green candles represent a prosperous future. A candle is lit for each day of Kwanzaa. The black candle is lit first, then red and green candles are lit alternately.

There are seven principles of Kwanzaa, one for each day. They are Umoja or Unity, Kujichagulia or Self-Determination, Ujima or Collective Work and Responsibility, Ujamaa or Co-operative Economics, Nia or Purpose, Kuumba or Creativity, and Imani or Faith.



HAPPY NEW YEAR AROUND THE WORLD

Many of us have watched with baited breath the lighted ball in New York's Times Square. Everyone holds their breath for the last few seconds. We're about to jump that seemingly large but invisible gap that separates the years. 1...0... Happy New Year! Bells sound, horns toot, and people hug one another wishing one another a Happy New Year.

Ring out the old year and bring in the New year!! The new year has begun with fresh promise. Here's our chance to start again, to do it right this time, to have another shot at success...at glory...at just accomplishing what we resolve to. It's time to shed that baggage from the year long gone and celebrate what can be in the 365 untouched days to come. Happy New Year!

We can trace the origins of a New Year's celebration back to the ancient Egyptians and Babylonians, at least 4,000 years ago. In Egypt, the Nile River signaled a new beginning for the farmers as the river flooded their land and enriched it with nutrient silt needed to grow crops for the next year. This happened near the end of September.

So how did we get to January 1 as the start of the year? That date was picked by the Roman Emperor Julius Caesar when he established his own calendar in 46 BC. The Roman Senate had actually tried to make January 1 New Year's Day in 153 BC, but it wasn't until Caesar stretched out 47 BC for 445 days that the date we're familiar with was synchronized with the sun. We've been on the Julian calendar ever since.

The month of January was named for the Roman God, Janus, who is pictured with two heads. One head looks forward and the other back, symbolizing a break between the old and new. The Greeks paraded a baby in a basket to represent the spirit of fertility. Christians adopted this symbol as the birth of the baby Jesus and continued what started as a pagan ritual. Today, our New Year's symbols are a newborn baby starting the next year and an old man winding up the last year.

Around the world, different cultures have their own traditions for welcoming the new year.

In West Bengal, in northern India, the people like to wear pink, red, purple and white flowers. Women favor yellow, the color of spring. Hindus also leave shrines next to their beds so they can see beautiful objects when they wake up to the new year.

In Vancouver, British Columbia, Canadians enjoy the traditional polar bear swim. People of all ages don their swim suits and take the plunge, an event that is sure to get you started in the new year with eyes wide open. In San Francisco, you will see this "cold, wet" tradition take place at Aquatic Park.

And then there are the New Year's Resolutions. You might be interested in knowing that we also inherited this tradition from the ancient Babylonians, whose most popular resolution was to return borrowed farm equipment.

New Year's Customs Worldwide

How do people around the world celebrate the coming of the New Year? There are many and varied customs from one country to another, ranging from watching fireworks to

eating special foods. Many of these customs are intended to bring good luck during the New Year ahead.

Here are some customs that we found on the Internet

Brazil

In all cities in Brazil, they have a big party on New Year's Eve, especially in Rio de Janeiro where people go to the beaches to watch fireworks. They usually wear white clothes in order to have good luck during the new year. This party used to be a kind of religious party, but today it has become a big show for tourists and citizens. The party's preparation begins on the morning of the 31st, and the fireworks start at midnight. It lasts around thirty minutes, and everybody makes wishes for the new year: money, love, health.

In other cities located near a beach after midnight, people will go to the beach, jump seven waves and throw flowers in the sea while making a wish. This will bring them good luck and fortune. They say that the goddess who protects the sea will make their wishes come true. Because of that, some people also light candles in the sand on the beach. This custom may have come about due to the mix of African and Indian cultures that developed in Brazil and have spread from coast to coast.

China

In China, New Year's Eve is a time for all family members to get together to chat. People will prepare special food for their families and clean their houses from top to bottom, children wear brand new clothing and gather lucky money from adults. If you were in China for New Year's Day, you would

see many kinds of paper cuttings on every family's windows. Paper cuttings are one of the most popular folk arts in China. They are properly framed or simply pasted onto the windows. Traditionally, they were only made of red paper. Most elderly women would make them just with a piece of red paper and a pair of scissors. They made them for their own families for the Chinese New Year. The Chinese believed that these paper cuttings can scare away the evil spirits, so they can't get into your house through the windows. The cuttings also bring you luck for the New Year.

At the dinner, there is a lot of foods such as dumplings, chicken, and fish which all have meanings of good luck. Officially, they celebrate for nine days during The New Year.

Mexico

In Mexico, many people usually gather with their relatives and friends to celebrate the new year. On New Year's Eve, they practice special customs. For example, they turn on the TV and wait to see or hear the bell ringing twelve times. Each time the bell rings, we eat one grape and make a wish. Then they hug each other and wish each other a Happy New Year. Some people, especially women, wear red underwear meaning you will find love in the next year. There are also people who take out their suitcases and walk around the block, meaning they wish they could travel next year.

Spain

For a long time, Spanish people have had a traditional custom to celebrate New Year's Eve. On the last day of the year, the 31st of December, they wait until twelve p.m. Everybody has to have twelve grapes ready to eat

when the clock starts to chime. It is traditional to listen to the clock from Puerta del Sol in Madrid.

Best wishes to you and your loved ones for a happy and prosperous New Year!

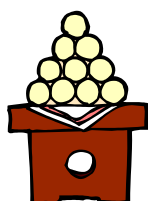
When it is midnight, each time the clock chimes, they put a grape in their mouth. By the time the clock has finished chiming, everybody has to have finished their grapes and the New Year starts, but nobody finishes eating the grapes on time.

Eating the grapes is very funny because everybody starts the New Year with a full mouthful of grapes. It's almost impossible to finish eating the grapes by the time the clock finishes chiming. Normally people still have all the grapes in their mouths, and they start looking at each other and have to laugh.

This tradition started in Spain because one year when there was a big grape harvest, the king of Spain decided to give grapes to everybody to eat on New Year's Eve.

Japan

In Japan making rice cakes (Mochi) at New Year is a long-honored tradition. Glutinous rice becomes mochi after it is steamed and pounded with a Kine and Usu (special utensils used for making the mochi). This brings family and close friends together and they all become involved with the process of making mochi. Some households have an electronic Mochi-tuki machines.



CAB CORNER

By Anna Groskin, CAB Liaison



October CAB Meeting

On October 16th, a CAB meeting was held at WORLD headquarters in Oakland. There were a few new faces there, and we always welcome women who have not been before to check the meetings out! After enjoy a tasty lunch from the Jade Villa on Broadway, we heard from Sidney about her trip to Anaheim for the National CAB meeting in September. She read some of a paper on cancer in WIHS women, and also updated us on the letter that the NCAB has written to the NIH about lab results sent out to research participants. Most of the women at the CAB meeting were interested in receiving all of their lab test results. This will be a topic of discussion at the next CAB meeting, as we try to iron out what lab results participants want mailed to them.

There was also some discussion about old HIV/clinical trials, and how different today's research is. HIV/AIDS clinical drug trials used to use death as an end point in their trials, and that today trials use "surrogate markers" such as opportunistic infections, CD4 counts, drug resistance, and viral loads. Old trials were being carried out at a time when there were few, if any treatments, for HIV-positive people, and participants in the studies were willing to take anything that they could get that might be remotely effective. Many participants did not take their complete doses because they had promised to share them with other participants who received a placebo. The results of many of these trials was incomplete. Sidney related the inaccurate results of old trials to the WIHS, and again reinforced the importance of being truthful in the interviews. We also talked a little about how the WIHS is different from clinical drug trials, in that it's an observational study, and the aims are to see what is happening in the real lives of real women. There are very few exclusion

criteria, unlike a lot of drug trials, and we are really interested in seeing how women live with HIV in their everyday lives.

Dr. Claire Borkert from EBAC joined us for the second half of the meeting and discussed a new class of HIV medications: entry inhibitors. She discussed each of these new drugs: receptor inhibitors, which would prevent HIV from bonding with several receptors (CD4, CCR5, and CXCR4) found on the outside of CD4 cells; fusion inhibitors (such as T-20 and T-1249, which are close to being brought to market) which would prevent HIV from fusing with a CD4 cell and entering the cell; and integrase inhibitors, which would prevent HIV RNA from integrating into a CD4 cell's DNA. These new drugs will offer HIV-positive people and their providers even more options in the fight against HIV. They are still a few years from being available to the general public, but everyone should stay tuned.

After Dr. Borkert's extremely informative presentation, she was bombarded with questions about other HIV meds and how they work, lipodystrophy and other side-effects of some HIV meds, and many other clinical issues. She was an amazing resource, and explained her answers in detail. It was a joy to have her at the meeting!

The next CAB meeting will be some time in February in San Francisco. Please call me for details after the New Year if you are interested in coming: 415-502-6284. I look forward to seeing you there!

Thanksgiving Holiday Luncheon

The Women's Study held its annual holiday luncheon on November 7th at the UCSF Parnassus Campus. We had a terrific room with views of the city, and even a glimpse of the Golden Gate Bridge! There were heaps of delicious turkey and all the fixings! The Gospel Choir at UCSF warmed up the crowd, and lively conversation and visiting took over after their singing. As dessert time rolled around, we started the door prize raffle – definitely everyone's favorite part of the afternoon! We gave out holiday gift baskets, gift certificates to the GAP,

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Let's try to keep your smile a healthy one.

massage gift certificates, spa passes, bath gift baskets, and the grand prize was a year-long family membership the YMCA! Everyone also received \$10 gift certificates to Safeway for the holidays. Not only was this a chance to celebrate the holiday season together, but it was an opportunity for all of us at the Women's Study to celebrate and thank all of the wonderful women in the Study who contribute to incredibly important research, and make our work possible. We hope that you all realize what an important part you play in Women's Health research, and we really do thank you, and wish you and yours the very happiest of holiday seasons!



Why Go to Your WIHS Oral Visit?



Many of you are participating in oral WIHS study but you are not coming quite often for your visits. Why should you come? Your oral health is very important. The dentists are looking into your mouth to make sure it is healthy. Besides cavities and gum disease the clinicians are looking for oral candidiasis (yeast infection), oral warts, oral cancer, and other oral health problems. It is important to have a healthy mouth. Why? Eating is something we all have to do in order to maintain ourselves. If it becomes too painful to eat because of painful bleeding gums or a sore tooth then you may have a depressed appetite due to the pain in your mouth. You need to see your WIHS oral clinician to inform them of your oral health problems.

Smoking can lead to some oral problems that you may not be aware of. Going for your visit twice a year will help to maintain your oral health.



A Plug for Hair

BY DR. MONICA GHANDI



Why hair? As you may have noticed, the WIHS is starting to collect hair samples as of our last visit. This collection involves the snipping off of a small thatch of hair (only 10-20 strands!) from the back of the head. You have probably heard this is to 'check HIV medication levels' in the hair, which is true . . . but why hair, exactly?

The problem is this: We are now seeing that these HIV medications are not the magic solutions to HIV we thought they were at the beginning. Many patients 'fail' these therapies for one reason or another and still more people have side effects with these medications. In fact, many patients have to stop their HIV medications because of these side effects, which include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, liver problems, high cholesterol, etc. We know that part of the reason these medications fail is because some patients have a hard time taking some of the complicated HIV regimens in the right way. However, we think that a big reason some patients may fail therapy (meaning, their HIV virus does not go down to an "undetectable" level on therapy) is because different people absorb or break down the medications differently. This means that not everyone gets the same effect from the same HIV pill because each person has different genetics – some people absorb a lot of the drug, some people absorb a little bit, some people break down the medication very quickly, some people break down the medication very slowly, etc. One way to figure out how much medication a patient actually gets in her system is to measure the level of that

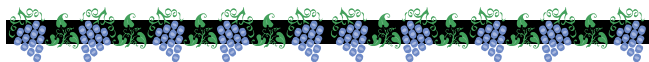
medication in her bloodstream. That way, we can get a rough idea of how much drug the HIV virus is actually seeing once the medication hits the bloodstream.

Doctors in Europe are looking at blood levels of HIV medications more than we are in the US to figure out how to adjust HIV therapy – a patient with very high blood levels of HIV medications and side effects from the medicines may need a lower dose, for instance. We are also looking at blood levels of these medications as part of the WIHS study. However, medications get into the bloodstream quickly and leave quickly and a single blood level can only tell us what medication the patient took over the past 24 hours. Thus, the interest in measuring drug levels in hair. HIV medications accumulate in hair more slowly than in the bloodstream, over a period of weeks to months, in fact. Hair levels tell us how much drug the patient has been seeing over a long time period, which may tell us more about why she is not doing well on the therapy or why she is having side effects on the therapy. Hair is also easy to collect since it requires just a small amount to measure drug levels. Different cosmetic treatments of hair (bleaching, perming, dyeing, etc.) may affect drug levels in hair but we are working on techniques to adjust for those procedures so that our levels will be accurate. Hopefully we will be able to *one day* tell you, just by analyzing a small piece of hair, how much HIV medication your body is actually seeing and help you adjust your medication doses to best suit your body. For now, we need the hair to help us figure out these techniques! Thanks, as always, for your participation in the study.

Happy New Year!

New Study for Women and Men at UCSF

By Jane Pannell



Hi! My name is Jane Pannell. Some of you may know we from my phone-answering days with the WIHS. In collaboration with researchers at San Francisco General Hospital, I am now working on two new studies which are important for women, and I would like your help in completing them.

We are examining the rate at which new T-cells replace old ones in HIV-positive people. We think hormones play a big role in the process. We will be enrolling both men and women, and comparing the results of the two groups.

For premenopausal women:

We are looking for positive men and women who have never taken any HIV medications, and whose T-cells are between 500 and 750. *(Some people who have taken antiretrovirals for only a short time in the distant past may also be eligible. If you think this is you, please call me).*

If you are interested in participating in this study, we will ask you to come in for one or two screening visits. We will draw blood and do a brief interview about your health history.

If you are eligible and decide to participate, we will ask you to come to the General Clinical Research Center at San Francisco General

Hospital for a 24-hour hospital stay. While you are in the hospital, you will receive IV (intravenous) deuterated glucose. This is a special sugar, which can be traced in the body, and allows us to track the turnover of T-cells. You will also be asked to drink deuterated water, which tastes and feels just like regular water and can also be traced in the body. During this time, small amounts of blood will be drawn via a small catheter (tiny plastic tube) in your arm. We will also be collecting saliva and urine specimens.

After you leave the hospital, you will be asked to drink small amounts of deuterated water every day for 6 weeks. You will come back to San Francisco General five times during the next two months for outpatient blood, urine, and saliva collections. These visits generally last less than a half hour.

After all these blood draws are finished, you will be reimbursed **\$600** by check. We can also provide transportation reimbursement.

You will be asked to repeat the 24-hour hospital stay and the follow-up visits about once a year for the next 4 years. Each year you will be paid another \$600.

For menopausal women who are about to start Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT):

We are looking for positive men and women who are planning to start HRT. If you are interested in participating, we will ask you to come in for a screening visit. We will do a brief interview and a blood draw to check your reproductive hormone levels. This will take about an hour.

If you are eligible, we will ask you to drink deuterated water at home several times a day

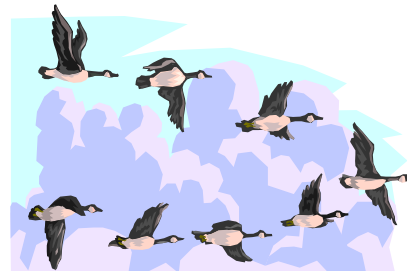
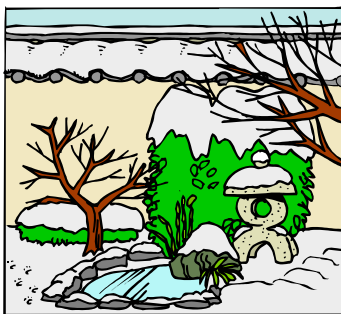
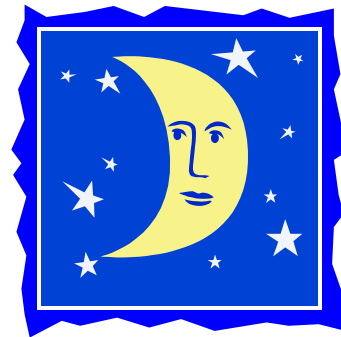
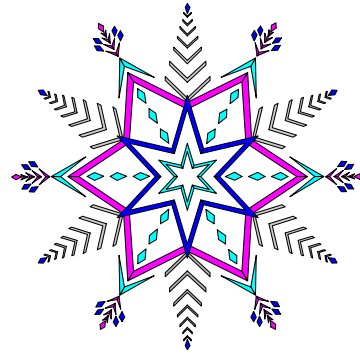
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for 3 to 6 weeks, *before you start your HRT*. At the end of this cycle, there will be two blood draws. You will then start your HRT, under the guidance of your healthcare provider.

Once you have been on HRT for 6 months, we will ask you to come back for another cycle of drinking the water for 3-6 weeks. We will do two blood draws during that cycle.

Participants will be reimbursed **\$240** by check after completing this study. We will also reimburse your transportation costs.

If you are interested in either of these studies, please call me at **415-353-9767** or **toll-free at 866-476-5109**. If you know any men who might like to participate, I'd love to hear from them as well!



We Want to Hear From You!

The WIHS Woman Newsletter is looking for submissions! Send us poems, stories, rants, raves – even pictures or drawings. Feel free to share your adventures, cooking tips, and art! Everyone has a story, and we'd love to include them in the newsletter – YOUR newsletter.

Send your submissions to:
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