



Studies Update

BOSS Continues with a New Direction

While it has been some time since you have heard from us, research using Beaver Dam Offspring Study data has been continuing! Since the last newsletter, we have published 19 articles, and have given 19 academic presentations locally, nationally, and internationally. We have also welcomed a new lead, Dr. Natascha Merten, PhD, MS, who has taken over the role of the Principal Investigator of the BOSS. With new funding from the National Institutes of Health, Dr. Merten and the research team have been preparing for the next examination wave which is called the Beaver Dam Offspring Study–Neurocognitive Aging Study (BOSS-NCAS). All previous participants of the BOSS will be eligible to participate in the BOSS-NCAS.

Dr. Natascha Merten has a long history with the BOSS (since 2016). She worked with the BOSS data first as a PhD student, and later as a scientist, both times under the direction of Dr. Karen Cruickshanks, PhD, the previous Principal Investigator of BOSS. Dr. Merten has a strong background in psychology and neurocognition, as you may recall from when she was featured in the 2020 BOSS newsletter. The BOSS-NCAS will continue research on sensory health along with a new focus on brain aging. We are planning for exams in 2024 and 2025 and will be in touch with invitation letters via mail and/or email.



Pictured left to right: Poorang Nori - Program Manager, Carol Creager, MS - Epidemiologist and Researcher, Kevin Komarek - Data Manager, Natascha Merten, PhD, MS - Principal Investigator of the Study Team, Fae Nachtigal - Recruiter and Scheduler, Carla Schubert, MS - Epidemiologist and Researcher, **Not shown:** Alicia Brisbois, Health Study Technician

Meet the New Team!

Carla has been with the BOSS since its beginning and worked on the Epidemiology of Hearing Loss Study (EHLS) and brings lots of experience to the table. Although other members of the team are newer to the BOSS, they have previous experience working in various research and nonprofit organizations. All members of the team have been prepping for the upcoming examination phase.

BOSS Research Presented in Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Dr. Merten and her colleagues from the Alzheimer's Disease Research Center at UW-Madison attended the Alzheimer's Association International Conference (AAIC) in Amsterdam last year.



Dr. Merten presented her research work from the BOSS, which showed midlife hearing, vision, olfactory, and motor function can improve the risk prediction of long-term cognitive decline and impairment in middle-aged to older adults. This suggests sensory and motor tests may become useful as non-invasive and low-cost screening tools to detect people at risk for brain aging early. More research is needed to establish these measures for usage as clinical diagnostic tools.

BOSS Research also Featured in a Press Release and in the Dementia Matters Podcast

Dr. Merten was interviewed on the Dementia Matters Podcast in 2023. She discussed an article by the research team, which was published and highlighted in the *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease* and focused on the innovative usage of new emerging blood-based biomarkers.

The Podcast session also features work from the Team, which came out of recent research using data from previous BOSS and EHLS waves. By combining unique data from the BOSS and their parents in the EHLS, the Team was able to look at differences between generations in their cognitive function.

The results showed people from Generation X had significantly better cognitive performance than their parents from the Silent and Baby Boom generations. This remained the case even after standardizing for other factors, such as age, education, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and other health factors. This suggests people from Generation X are experiencing healthier aging than previous generations. In our previous work with BOSS and EHLS data, we have shown similar benefits for other health outcomes, including better hearing and vision in more recent generations.

You can listen to or read the complete Dementia Matters podcast [here](#)*.



For more news and information please visit: <http://boss.pophealth.wisc.edu>

We love hearing from you!

Please contact us if you have questions, or would like to update your contact information at:

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*Link to the "Dementia Matters" Podcast: <https://www.adrc.wisc.edu/dementia-matters/studies-look-generational-differences-and-associations-between-cognition-sensory>