

A “Super” Case of Longevity

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A 109-year-old woman was admitted to the hospital for mild congestive heart failure and bradycardia. She scored 30 out of 30 on the Mini-mental status exam. Further conversations revealed that she was a native of San Francisco and that she was 9 years old during the earthquake of 1906. She was 109 years old during hospitalization (Fig. 1). About 5 months after the hospitalization, she celebrated her 110th birthday (Fig. 2).

A centenarian is a person who has lived to the age of 100, and a supercentenarian is a person who has reached the age of 110. The number of centenarians in the United States was counted as 50,454 in the 2000 Census, increased from the 37,306 reported in 1990.¹ The US Census Bureau estimates the current number of centenarians to be 79,682 and projects an increase to 580,605 by the year 2040.² The number of supercentenarians was reported as 1400 in the 2000 Census.³

Hospital physicians can expect to see a growing number of centenarians in their practice as this segment of the population continues to increase.

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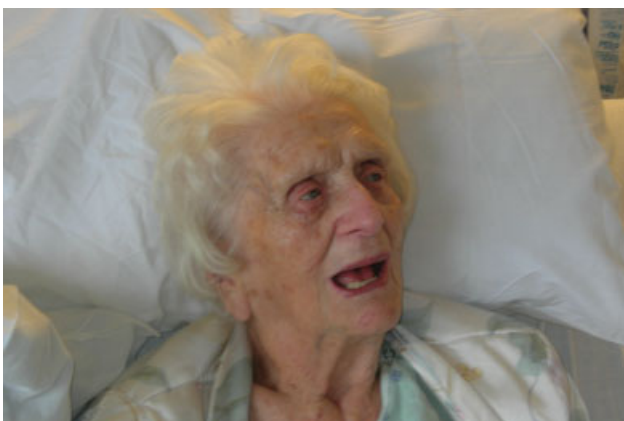


FIGURE 1. 109 year-old patient during hospitalization.

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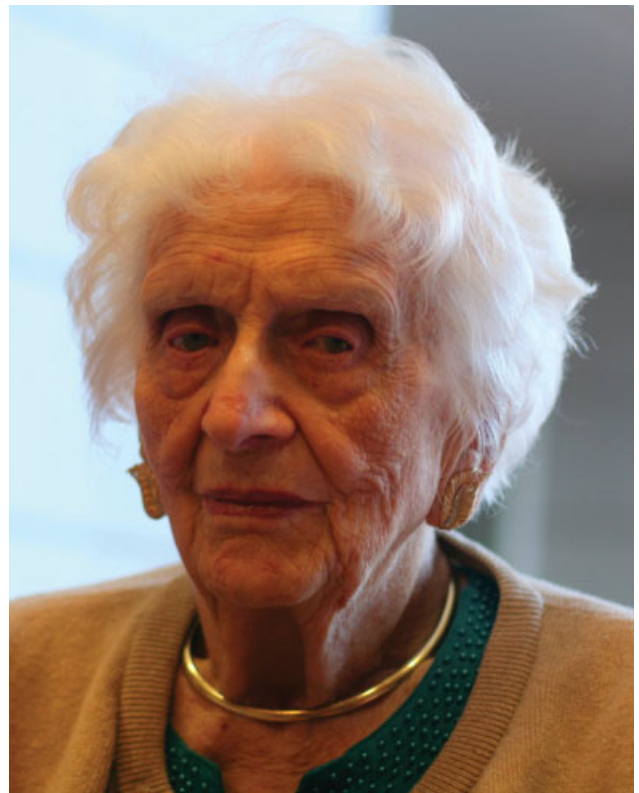


FIGURE 2. Same patient, now celebrating her 110th birthday.