

New Research on Aging and Cognition From Psychological Science

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Read about new research on aging and cognition published in *Psychological Science*.

[Stereotype Threat Strengthens Automatic Recall and Undermines Controlled Processes in Older Adults](#)

Marie Mazerolle, Isabelle Régner, Pauline Morisset, François Rigalleau, and Pascal Huguet

Older people perform worse on memory tasks when they think they will be stereotypically judged. One theory about this says that stereotypes impair older adults' working memory, while another theory suggests that stereotypes increase activation of their prepotent responses, which are often incorrect. Older and younger participants were or were not primed with a stereotype threat and then performed a working memory task and a cued-recall task. Older participants primed with stereotype threats performed worse on the working memory task and displayed greater use of automatic memory on the cued-recall task. These findings suggest that the two theories explaining stereotype threat may in fact be compatible.

[Pulmonary Function as a Cause of Cognitive Aging](#)

Charles F. Emery, Deborah Finkel, and Nancy L. Pedersen

New research has suggested that cognitive decline predicts the occurrence of physical limitations; however, these findings contradict past research indicating that pulmonary function predicts long-term cognitive decline. Cognitive and pulmonary functioning for participants in the Swedish Adoption/Twin Study of Aging was assessed at 7 time points spread over a 19-year period. The researchers utilized dual-change-score models and found that the relationship between pulmonary function and cognitive decline appears to be directional, with pulmonary functioning predicting decline in cognitive abilities. This suggests that programs that help older adults maintain pulmonary functioning may be important for preventing cognitive deficits.