

Enhancing cognition in older adults

Psychology



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Article Summary of Illinois Urbana-Campaign. “ Enhancing Cognition in Older Adults Also Changes Personality.” ScienceDaily, 18 Jan. Web. 30 May 30, 2012.

The authors of this study examined a program directed towards improving cognition in older adults, which in turn was found to increase the openness of the participants to new experiences. This finding is in direct contradiction to the long-held belief that personality traits are fixed and that they cannot be changed once one reaches adulthood. The study found that the personality trait of openness, which encompasses being creative and taking new ideas and challenges positively, is significantly associated with one’s cognitive abilities.

The study was conducted on 183 adults between the ages of 60 and 94. These participants were randomly assigned to a cognitive intervention group or a control group and they were each provided with pattern-recognition and problem solving tasks and puzzles which they had to complete in their homes. Once the participants returned the completed materials, they were provided with new tasks that were more challenging than the previous one. Baseline data collected before the intervention was then compared to data collected after intervention. The results were very encouraging as the authors of this study believe that the program helped the participants to become confident of their reasoning abilities which in turn increased their openness to intellectually challenging and creative tasks.

This article is significant as it demonstrates that personality traits can change thorough non-psychopharmacological interventions. This study therefore provides a new dimension in addressing issues dealing with personality trait of openness in older adults.

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