



"Linking the senior community to university research"

Note from the WRAP Team

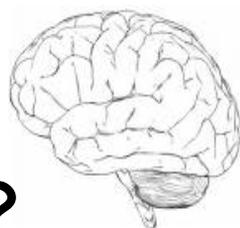
First of all, we'd like to thank you for taking the time to take part in our quest to better understand the aging process through research. Without you our work would not be possible. Thanks to volunteers like you we will be able to further our knowledge of the aging process and investigate the differences between healthy aging, and disease processes including but not limited to stroke, Parkinson and Alzheimer disease. In the following newsletter we describe some of the studies which were completed by WRAP volunteers like you.

Brain



Teasers

*Try these out
just for fun!*



Riddle A: Jimmy's mother had 4 children. She named the first child Monday, named the second child Tuesday, named the third child Wednesday.

Question: What is the name of the fourth child?

Riddle B: In a year there are 12 months, 7 of the months have 31 days.

Question: How many months have 28 days?

*Answers: A: Jimmy. "Jimmy's mother had 4 children". B: All 12 months.
Word Scramble: 1) applicider: 2) turkey; 3) scarecrow; 4) harvest.*

Research Update

Memory for Everyday Tasks

Researchers: Mike Ross and Emily Schryer

Research in memory and aging has traditionally shown an overall pattern of decline in memory with age. Most of this research on memory and aging, however, has been done in the laboratory and has not reflected the strategies adopted by older adults to cope with memory decline. In everyday life, adults may compensate for memory decline through a variety of strategies including the use of memory aids such as calendars and appointment books.

In this study, 28 older (aged 60+) and 29 younger (aged 17-25) participants were brought into the lab and asked to describe their strategies for dealing with a variety of memory tasks such as keeping track of keys, remembering appointments, taking medication, etc. For five days participants then tracked their own memory performance, filling out an online daily questionnaire in which they indicated both how often they had been confronted with each type of memory task that day (e.g. how many appointments they had scheduled), and how many of each those tasks they had forgotten.

Older participants in this study reported that they used memory aids and strategies more often, and relied less on their memory to keep track of everyday memory tasks than did younger participants. Over the 5 days that they filled out the questionnaire, older adults also reported

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Fall Word Scramble

Unscramble the words below

1. cladppeeir _____
2. yreutk _____
3. caoacrswr _____
4. hvesatr _____

Research Update Continued

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forgetting fewer everyday memory tasks than did younger adults. Older adults were generally less likely to report misplacing their keys, missing appointments etc. This was true even when we took into account the number of each type of memory task participants were faced with on a daily basis. The results of this study suggest that older adults cope quite effectively with the memory tasks with which they are confronted on a daily basis. In fact, according to our findings, if you want someone to help you remember an appointment it seems you would be better off asking an older adult rather than a university aged younger adult.

Understanding the Influence of Fear of Falling on Balance

Researcher: Laura Hauck, Eric Roy, Steve Prentice, and Jim Frank

Falls in the elderly continue to be a concern. Statistics show that injuries account for nearly 10% of the hospital admissions in individuals over the age of 65 and that unintended falls account for 84% of those injury-related admissions. Once discharged from hospital, the loss of mobility and changes to activities of daily living can lead to a decline in physical function and independent living.

Prediction and thereby prevention of falls in the elderly remains problematic. The multifactorial nature of both the risk factors and causes of falls makes identification of those at risk extremely difficult. Moreover, independent community-dwelling older individuals who have never fallen are unlikely to seek medical attention for a potential fall and equally unlikely to enrol in exercise or educational fall prevention programs, which makes predicting and preventing the first fall in these individuals nearly impossible.

Developing an assessment tool used to identify those at risk of falling would be useful in overcoming these challenges.

Participants in this study are asked to answer a series of questionnaires addressing common health problems associated with falls, fear of falling, balance confidence, and anxiety. Participants also perform a variety of balancing and memory tasks. This information combined will allow us to better understand the relationships among identified risk factors and falls, thereby improving risk assessment tools and fall prevention programs.

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Call for Participants!

If you are currently not a volunteer of the Waterloo Research in Aging Participant Pool please contact us to find out more about how you can help!

If you already are a volunteer, please share this newsletter with any family and friends who you think might be interested in taking part in research studies.

For further information please contact us

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