

Study: Does IQ drop as people age?

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U.S. scientists are attempting to determine if perception deficits that accompany aging in many people are responsible for declines in IQ scores.

Researchers at Case Western Reserve University's Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences conducted two coding experiments to test the hypothesis older people suffer perception problems that impair their abilities to perform well on intelligence tests.

Psychology Professor Grover Gilmore, who led the National Institute of Health-funded investigation, says perception deficits gradually appear over the life span of individuals and seem to reach problem levels in older adults and can greatly impact functions in people with dementia or other cognitive-impaired conditions.

"Even subtle deficits, such as a reduction in spatial contrast sensitivity, can impair performance on intelligence tests," concluded Gilmore.

The study is reported in the April issue of the American Psychological Association's journal *Psychology and Aging*.

Other investigators in the research were Ruth Spinks and Cecil Thomas.

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