

Brain training computer game improves some cognitive functions relatively quickly

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The brain training computer game "Brain Age" can improve executive functions and processing speed, even with a relatively short training period, but does not affect global cognitive status or attention, according to a study published Jan. 11 in the online journal *PLoS ONE*.

The study compared the cognitive functions for 32 elderly participants before and after four weeks of playing a computer game, either Brain Age or Tetris, for 15 minutes per day, at least five days a week. At the end of the four weeks, the researchers found that the Brain Age players showed small improvement in their executive functions and processing speeds, but other cognitive functions were unchanged.

According to the researchers, led by Rui Nouchi of Tohoku University in Japan, where the Brain Age game was created, the relatively short training time used in the study suggests that it may be possible to improve some cognitive functions quite rapidly.

More information: Nouchi R, Taki Y, Takeuchi H, Hashizume H, Akitsuki Y, et al. (2012) Brain Training Game Improves Executive Functions and Processing Speed in the Elderly: A Randomized Controlled Trial. *PLoS ONE* 7(1): e29676.

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