Medical Xpress

Memory improves for older adults using computerized brain-fitness program

June 25 2013

UCLA researchers have found that older adults who regularly used a brain-fitness program on a computer demonstrated significantly improved memory and language skills.

The UCLA team studied 69 dementia-free participants, with an average age of 82, who were recruited from retirement communities in Southern California. The participants played a computerized brain-fitness program called Dakim BrainFitness, which trains individuals through more than 400 exercises in the areas of short- and long-term memory, language, visual-spatial processing, reasoning and problem-solving, and calculation skills.

The researchers found that of the 69 participants, the 52 individuals who over a six-month period completed at least 40 sessions (of 20 minutes each) on the program showed improvement in both immediate and delayed memory skills, as well as language skills.

The findings suggest that older adults who participate in computerized brain training can improve their cognitive skills.

The study's findings add to a body of research exploring whether brain fitness tools may help improve language and memory and ultimately help protect individuals from the cognitive decline associated with aging and Alzheimer's disease.

Age-related memory decline affects approximately 40 percent of older

adults. And while previous studies have shown that engaging in stimulating mental activities can help older adults improve their memory, little research had been done to determine whether the numerous computerized brain-fitness games and memory training programs on the market are effective in improving memory. This is one of the first studies to assess the cognitive effects of a computerized memory-training program.

The study is published in the July issue of the *American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*.

Provided by University of California, Los Angeles