

# Do certain parts of the brain stay young?

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(Medical Xpress)—New research at the University of Adelaide is looking at how the human brain ages, which could lead to insights into how to repair the brain when it's damaged by stroke or traumatic brain injury.

The study, being conducted in the University's School of Psychology, will compare the ability of older and younger people to respond to visual and non-[visual stimuli](#) in order to measure their "spatial attention" skills.

"Spatial attention is extremely important in our day-to-day lives because it allows us to move around our environment and interact with other people," says Dr Joanna Brooks, Research Fellow in the University's School of Psychology.

"Being able to process spatial information can impact on many aspects of our lives, from driving, to walking down the street, or simply picking up a glass of water from a table.

"The part of the brain that controls spatial attention is called the right parietal lobe. We're hoping that our study will shed light on how the right parietal lobe ages across the entire human lifespan," Dr Brooks says.

"Young people aged between 18-40 often show a tendency to pay more attention to the left side of space on a range of [cognitive tasks](#). We have recently found some evidence that [older adults](#) perform in the same way as younger adults, which suggests that the part of the brain that controls spatial attention – the right parietal lobe – remains 'young' throughout

the full human lifespan."

The University of Adelaide project is part of an [international collaboration](#) with scientists at the University of Edinburgh and Queen Margaret University in Scotland to better understand how the brain ages.

Dr Brooks says researchers still have many questions about what happens in our brains when they age, how quickly they age, and what factors contribute towards it.

"One of the big questions is: is there a part of the brain that is protected from ageing? We hope to discover more in this study," she says.

Provided by University of Adelaide

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