

# Examining lifetime intellectual enrichment and cognitive decline in older patients

June 23 2014

---

Higher scores that gauged education (years of school completed) and occupation (based on attributes, complexities of a job), as well as higher levels of mid/late-life cognitive activity (e.g., reading books, participating in social activities and doing computer activities at least three times per week) were linked to better cognition in older patients.

Previous research has linked intellectual enrichment with possible protection against cognitive decline. The authors examined lifetime intellectual enrichment with baseline performance and the rate of cognitive decline in [older patients](#) without dementia and estimated the protection provided against [cognitive decline](#).

The authors studied 1,995 individuals (ages 70 to 89 years) without dementia (1,718 were cognitively normal and 277 individuals had mild [cognitive impairment](#)) in Olmsted County, Minnesota. They analyzed education/occupation scores and mid/late-life cognitive activity based on self-reports.

Better education/occupation scores and mid/late-life cognitive activity were associated with better cognitive performance. The authors suggest high lifetime intellectual enrichment may delay the onset of cognitive impairment by almost nine years in carriers of the APOE4 genotype, a risk factor for Alzheimer disease, compared with low lifetime intellectual enrichment.

"Lifetime intellectual enrichment might delay the onset of cognitive

impairment and be used as a successful preventive intervention to reduce the impending dementia epidemic." Prashanthi Vemuri, Ph.D., of the Mayo Clinic and Foundation, Rochester, Minn., and colleagues said in their *JAMA Neurology* article.

**More information:** *JAMA Neurol.* Published online June 23, 2014.  
[DOI: 10.1001/jamaneurol.2014.963](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamaneurol.2014.963)

Provided by The JAMA Network Journals

Citation: Examining lifetime intellectual enrichment and cognitive decline in older patients (2014, June 23) retrieved 3 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-06-lifetime-intellectual-enrichment-cognitive-decline.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--