

People know little about brain health but want to know more

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People do not think about their own brain health and are unsure how to maintain it, according to a recent interview study in the Lifebrian project.

A healthy brain is essential for [general health](#) and wellbeing, and to prevent neurological disorders. "Brain health" is about developing and

maintaining a healthy brain throughout life.

The study investigated the views of 44 brain research participants in four European countries about the brain and [brain health](#).

People need more information

The study found that most participants were unfamiliar with the concept of brain health, did not consciously think about their brain health and did not purposefully adopt lifestyles to take care of their brain health.

The study participants were interested in taking brain health tests to learn about their personal risk of developing brain diseases, and were willing to take measures to maintain their brain health if tailored follow-up was provided and the measures had a proven effect. They also wanted more information on brain health.

These results are in line with results from other studies which have shown that people may be aware of which behaviors help to take care of the brain but are in need of detailed guidance regarding which they should adopt.

The study's lead researcher, Isabelle Budin-Ljøsne from the Norwegian Institute of Public Health, believes the public needs tailored information about the importance of brain health and how to maintain it:

"One in three will develop a brain disease in the future. It is therefore crucial to give people concise, practical and evidence-based information about how to maintain a healthy brain according to their needs," she says.

"Incentives, such as affordable access to sports, social or [cultural activities](#) may also encourage people to take better care of their brain"

she adds.

About the study

The present multisite, in-depth interview study investigated the perspectives of 44 adult participants already recruited in brain research studies in Norway, Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom who were not diagnosed with brain health disorders.

Specifically, the study explored their views on the brain and brain health, their interest in maintaining a healthy brain, their willingness to learn more about personal brain health, and their intention to promote good brain health and prevent development of brain disorders.

The Global Brain Health Survey

Following this initial study, the Global Brain Health Survey was launched to investigate people's perspectives on brain health from all over the world. The survey is open to all above 18 years of age, takes approximately 15 minutes to complete, and is currently available in 12 languages.

The [survey results](#) will be used to develop user-friendly policy recommendations for better brain health.

The Lifebrain project

This study is part of the Lifebrain project, a five-year research project in the Horizon2020 program of the European Commission. The consortium combines data from 11 European cohorts to explore environmental, social, occupational and lifestyle factors that affect [brain](#) health. The Norwegian Institute of Public Health is one of the project partners.

More information: Barbara Bodorkos Friedman et al. Are People Ready for Personalized Brain Health? Perspectives of Research Participants in the Lifebrain Consortium, *The Gerontologist* (2019). [DOI: 10.1093/geront/gnz155](https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gnz155)

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