

Lifestyle improvements may lessen cognitive decline

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Results from a new study suggest that lifestyle changes may help to improve cognition in older adults experiencing cognitive decline that precedes dementia.

In the study published in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, 119 individuals older than 65 years of age who were experiencing [cognitive decline](#) were randomized to a [control group](#) or an intervention group for 8 weeks. The control group received [online information](#) related to dementia and lifestyle risk factors, Mediterranean diet, physical activity, and cognitive engagement.

Participants were instructed to implement this information into their own lifestyles. The intervention group received the same online information, plus active components to assist with implementing this information into their lifestyles: dietitian sessions, an exercise physiologist session, and online brain training.

Over 6 months of follow-up, investigators noted that participants in the intervention group were able to improve their lifestyle and had higher cognition scores than those in the control group. The results suggest that lifestyle-based changes may modify the course of cognitive decline.

"We've known for some time that [lifestyle changes](#) such as these can reduce dementia risk in the general population. What this study adds is that with the right intervention, people experiencing cognitive decline may retain sufficient neuroplasticity for their brain to 'bounce back' from decline," said lead author Mitchell McMaster, a Ph.D. student at The Australian National University.

More information: *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* (2020). onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jgs.16762

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