

Food insecurity tied to slightly faster memory decline

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Food insecurity is associated with slightly faster memory decline in

middle- to older-aged U.S. adults, according to a study published online July 3 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Peiyi Lu, Ph.D., from Columbia University in New York City, and colleagues examined whether exposure to [food insecurity](#) is associated with changes in memory function among 12,609 middle- to older-aged U.S. adults (11,951 [food](#)-secure and 658 food-insecure) followed for 18 years (1998 to 2016).

The researchers found that over time, the [memory function](#) of the food-secure respondents decreased by 0.045 standard deviation units annually (β for time, -0.045), with a faster memory decline rate among food-insecure respondents than food-secure respondents. However, the magnitude of the coefficient was small (β for food [insecurity](#) \times time, -0.0030), yielding an estimated 0.67 additional (i.e., excess) years of memory aging over a 10-year period for food-insecure respondents compared with food-secure respondents.

"The study noted a longitudinal association between food insecurity and memory decline, suggesting possible long-term negative cognitive function outcomes of exposure to food insecurity in older age," the authors write. "Future work should investigate the underlying mechanisms through which food insecurity influences cognitive health and evaluate the potential cognitive health benefits of food assistance programs."

More information: Peiyi Lu et al, Associations of Food Insecurity and Memory Function Among Middle to Older–Aged Adults in the Health and Retirement Study, *JAMA Network Open* (2023). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.21474](#)

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