

Introduction

Superagers are older adults with episodic memory performance comparable to that of adults 20 to 30 years younger. However, the majority of evidence originates from high-income countries, limiting the generalizability of findings to populations in low and middle-income countries (LMIC), such as Brazil. Therefore, the aim of this study was to estimate the proportion of Superagers within the Brazilian population and to investigate if residence area transition is associated with this group.

Methods

We used data from the second wave of the Brazilian Longitudinal Study of Aging (ELSI), a nationally representative sample of adults aged 50 years or older. Participants with a history of stroke, Parkinson’s disease, Alzheimer’s disease, proxy interviews, or missing cognitive data were excluded. Superagers were defined as those aged ≥ 75 years with episodic memory performance comparable to adults aged 50–60 years, alongside preserved verbal fluency and temporal orientation. Lifetime residence transition was categorized by comparing childhood, before age 15, and current residence into: Rural-Rural, Rural-Urban, Urban-Rural, and Urban-Urban. The association between residence transition and superaging was assessed using logistic regression.

Acknowledgements



nº2025/16155-0

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Results

Among the 704 participants aged 75 years or older, 268 were classified as superagers, representing 38.1% of the sample. Superagers had a mean age of 80.1 ± 4.2 years; 54.8% were male, 51.6% self-identified as White, with a mean of 6.8 ± 4.7 years of formal education, a monthly per capita household income of R\$ $1,885.0 \pm 2,637.7$, and only 6.6% reported limitations in instrumental activities of daily living.

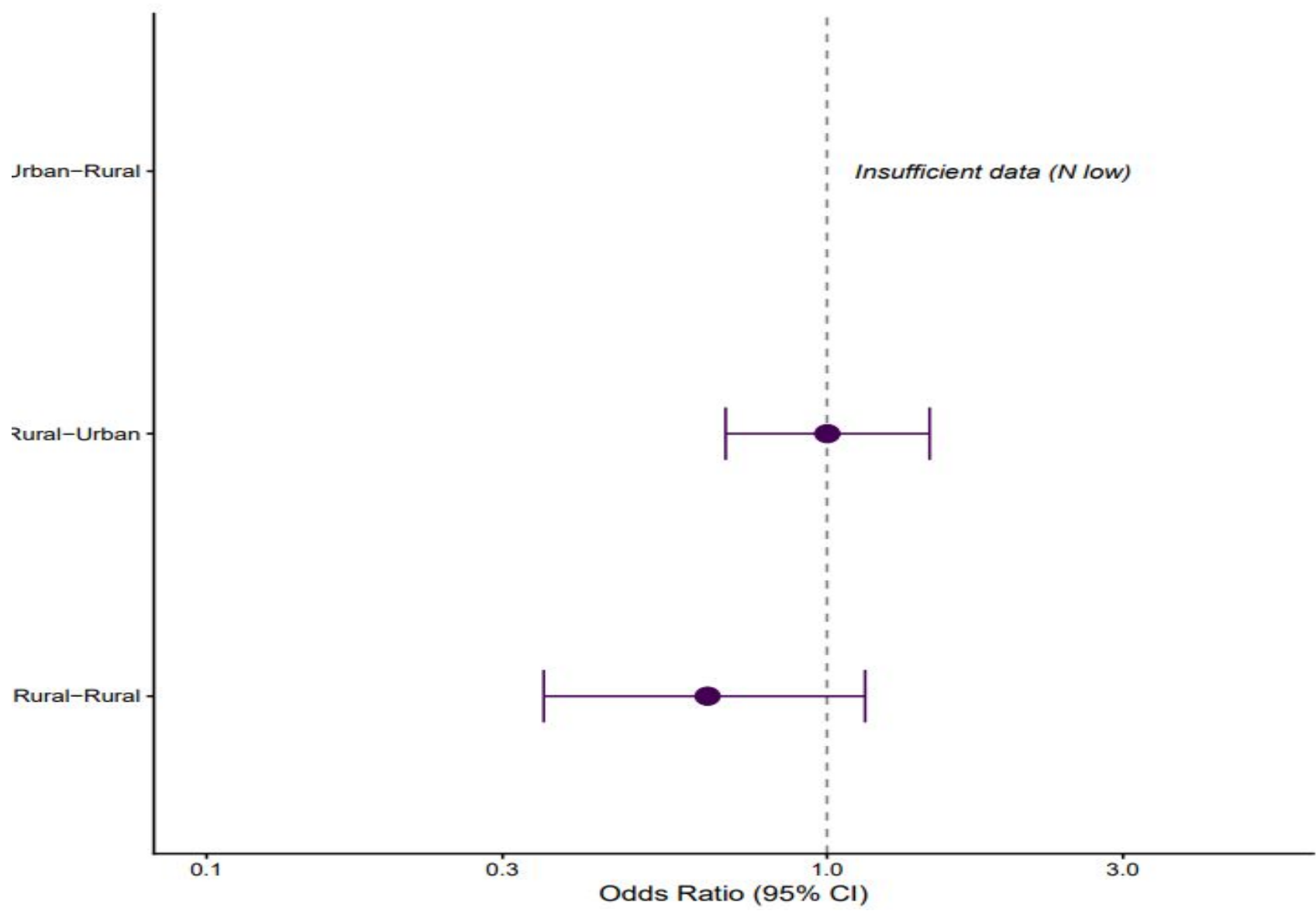
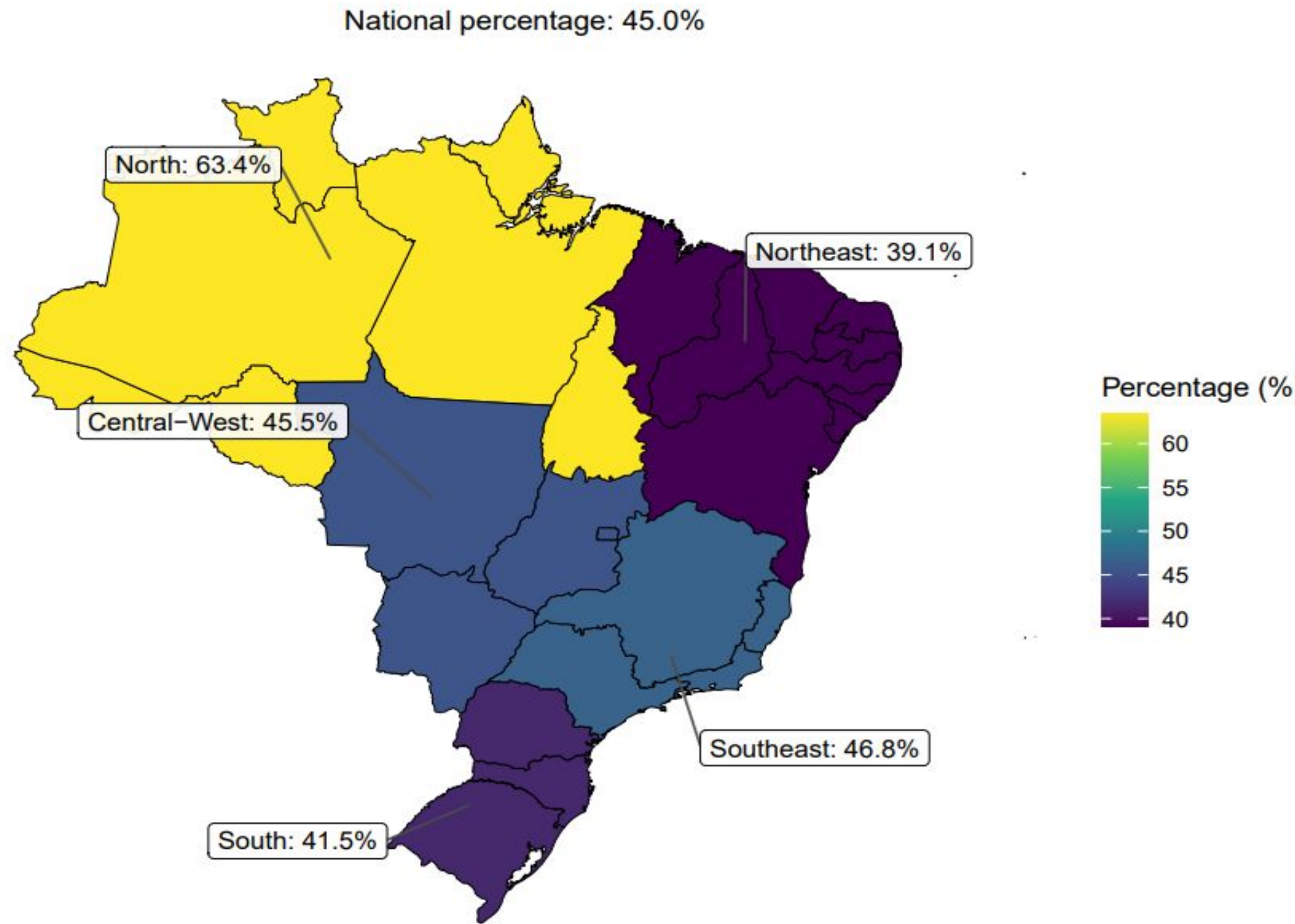
Compared to typical older adults, superagers had higher educational attainment, greater per capita household income, and fewer functional limitations. Superagers accounted for 45.0% of the Brazilian population aged 75 and older, with proportions varying across regions and the highest prevalence observed in the North (63.4%).

No association was found between residential trajectory and the likelihood of being classified as a superager.

Variable	SuperAgers (n = 268)	Typical (n = 436)	p-value
Education (years)	6.8 ± 4.7	4.0 ± 4.3	< 0.001
Monthly per capita income (R\$)	1,885	1,479	0.02
Instrumental activities of daily living	6.6%	26.2%	< 0.001
Hypertension	45.7%	58.8%	0.003
Diabetes	16.3%	20.2%	0.3
Depression	11.7%	22.2%	0.008

Conclusion

These findings advance our understanding of the characteristics of Brazilian SuperAgers and the sociodemographic factors linked to cognitive preservation in aging. Although lifetime residential trajectory was not associated with SuperAger status, the results highlight the need for policies and interventions aimed at reducing social inequalities and promoting healthy aging.



References

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Take home messages

- Nearly half of Brazilians aged ≥ 75 assessed showed episodic memory performance comparable to adults 20–30 years younger
- Superager status does not imply absence of chronic disease: hypertension and diabetes prevalence was similar across groups
- The Superager concept needs to be adapted to the sociocultural context of low- and middle-income countries
- Reducing inequalities in education and income should be among the public health priorities to promote healthy cognitive aging at the population level