

Perceived Age-Related Gains and Losses Account for Cognitive Performance Beyond Dementia Risk Factors

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Eugene Tang, Enrico Sella, Blossom C M Stephan, Anne Corbett, Clive Ballard, Byron Creese, Dag Aarsland, Adam Hampshire, Abbie Palmer, Serena Sabatini

Self-perceptions of aging and, more specifically, perceived age-related gains and losses, may help detect cognitive functioning in midlife and older age				
INTRODUCTION	METHODS	RESULTS	CONCLUSIONS	REFERENCES
Self-Perceptions of Aging (SPA) -i.e. how individuals perceive their own aging-influence health outcomes, including cognitive performance ¹ . However, whether SPA are associated with cognitive performance after having accounted for established modifiable risk factors for dementia remains unexplored. This Cross-sectional study examined the associations between SPA, 13 modifiable dementia risk factors, and cognitive functioning in middle-aged and older adults.	Data came from 11,002 cognitively healthy UK PROTECT participants aged 50-85 years. SPA was measured via felt age ² , Lawton's Attitudes Toward Own Aging scale ³ , and Awareness of Age-Related Change (AARC) questionnaire ⁴ . Dementia risk factors were those reported by Livingston et al. (2024) ⁵ except for air pollution. Cognitive performance was assessed through working memory (WM) and verbal reasoning (VR) tasks ⁶ . Hierarchical regressions were used.	SPA measures accounted for significant additional variance in WM (total R ² = 8%) and VR (total R ² = 9%) beyond age, sex, and the 13 modifiable dementia risk factors. Older age was associated with poorer WM and VR. Low education and depression showed the strongest associations with worse WM and VR. Beyond covariates and risk factors, AARC-Gains and AARC-Losses, but not felt age and attitudes towards own aging, were negatively associated with both WM and VR.	Higher scores on some SPA measures (AARC-Gains and AARC-Losses) are associated with cognitive performance alongside some dementia risk factors that showed differential patterns across cognitive outcomes. These findings suggest that awareness of age-related changes warrants consideration alongside traditional modifiable risk factors, integrating psychological perspectives into cognitive aging research.	¹ Westerhof, G.J., et al., <i>Longitudinal effects of subjective aging on health and longevity: An updated meta-analysis</i> . Psychology and Aging, 2023. 38(3): p. 147-166. ² Pinquart, M. and H.-W. Wahl, <i>Subjective age from childhood to advanced old age: A meta-analysis</i> . Psychology and Aging, 2021. 36(3): p. 394-406 ³ Lawton, M.P., <i>The Philadelphia Geriatric Center Morale Scale: A revision</i> . Journal of Gerontology, 1975. 30(1): p. 85-89. ⁴ Kaspar, R., et al., <i>Measuring awareness of age-related change: Development of a 10-item short form for use in large-scale surveys</i> . The Gerontologist, 2019. 59(3): p. e130-e140. ⁵ Livingston, G., et al., <i>Dementia prevention, intervention, and care: 2024 report of the Lancet standing Commission</i> . The Lancet, 2024. 404(10452): p. 572-628. ⁶ Corbett, A., et al., <i>The effect of an online cognitive training package in healthy older adults: An online randomized controlled trial</i> . Journal of the American Medical Directors Association, 2015. 16(11): p. 990-997.
				CONTACT
				Serenasabatini@ub.edu Eugene.Tang@newcastle.ac.uk
				