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Age Decrements

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Synonyms

[Age-associated cognitive decline](#)

Definition

The concept of age decrements in neuropsychology refers to a decline in cognitive performance due to normal aging rather than due to an extraneous or internal event that is known to negatively affect cognitive performance, such as a traumatic brain injury, stroke, psychiatric condition, or extensive drug use history.

Current Knowledge

Variability in the performance of aging individuals adds complexity to the determination of specific age decrements on neuropsychological tests.

It is generally thought that individuals are more likely to retain “crystallized” knowledge (e.g., that which is practiced, overlearned, and skill-based) than “fluid” knowledge (e.g., problem-solving). As there are factors that heighten the risk for age decrements, protective factors may counteract the risk. For instance, higher levels of education and positive health status may slow down the rate of cognitive decline that would otherwise occur with increasing age.

One concept that illustrates age decrements is age-associated memory impairment (AAMI), which pertains to age-related decline in performance specifically in terms of memory.

Cross-References

- [Cognitive Reserve](#)
- [Memory Impairment](#)

References and Readings

- Lezak, M., Howieson, D. B., Bigler, E. D., & Tranel, D. (2012). *Neuropsychological assessment* (5th ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.