

Title:

Impact of late-life employment, health status, and education on inductive reasoning, verbal memory, and verbal ability in older adults: The Seattle Longitudinal Study.

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There is evidence that an engaged lifestyle, health, and education are influential to cognitive function in older adults. The current study examined the importance of late life work experience, health status, and education on the overall pattern of individual differences in inductive reasoning, verbal memory, and verbal ability using linear mixed models with SAS PROC MIXED. Participants, a sub-sample from the Seattle Longitudinal Study (N=272), were 60+ years old at T1 (M=67.6; Range = 60-84), well-educated (M=15.1 years), and working during at least 1 occasion of measurement, who participated in 1991, 1998, and 2005. Covariates tested included the work domains of control, complexity and routine, perceptual speed, subjective and objective health status, years of education, age, and gender. Two work status groups were considered: 1) participants working during 1 wave only; 2) participants working during 2 or 3 waves. Decline in verbal ability was associated with linear and quadratic age ($p < .05$), 1-occasion work status ($p < .01$), slower perceptual speed ($p < .001$), fewer years of education ($p < .001$), poorer objective health status ($p = .05$), and in men ($p < .001$). Reasoning decline was associated with older age ($p < .01$), 1-occasion work status ($p < .05$), slower perceptual speed ($p < .001$), and less education ($p < .01$). Declines in memory were associated with older age ($p < .001$), low work control ($p = .06$), slow perceptual speed ($p < .001$), less education ($p < .01$), and in men ($p < .001$). The results indicate that after controlling for health, education, and perceptual speed, continued employment may be a protective factor for inductive reasoning and verbal ability in older adults.