

Subjective perceptions of (cognitive) aging

CIGEV Research Day

Organizers

Matthias Kliegel, Chiara Scarampi, Emilie Joly-Burra, Gianvito Laera

A joint workshop by the Center for the Interdisciplinary Study of Gerontology and Vulnerability (CIGEV), the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences of the University of Geneva, and the Swiss Center of Expertise in Life Course Research.

Program Overview

Thursday, December 1, 2022

Auditoire Jacques-Louis Reverdin (Room B02.2526), Centre Médical Universitaire (CMU)
Rue Michel-Servet 1, 1206 Genève

09:15 – 09:30	Welcome address
09:30 – 10:45	Hans-Werner Wahl <i>Recent Developments in Subjective Aging Research (With a Glance on Cognitive Aging)</i>
10:45 – 11:15	Coffee break
11:15 – 12:30	Christopher Hertzog <i>A metacognitive intervention to improve everyday cognitive functioning in cognitively healthy older adults</i>
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch
13:30 – 14:45	Ann Pearman <i>Vulnerability Profiles: A challenge for metacognitive interventions</i>
14:45 – 16:15	Coffee poster session
16:15 – 17:30	Stephanie Cosentino <i>Subjective Cognitive Aging in the context of Alzheimer's Disease</i>
17:30 – 17:45	Wrap-up discussion and farewell

Abstracts

Prof. Hans-Werner Wahl

Heidelberg University, Heidelberg, Germany

Recent Developments in Subjective Aging Research (With a Glance on Cognitive Aging)

Research on subjective aging flourished during the recent decades and certainly gained a new momentum at multiple levels in the aftermath of Robert Kastenbaum et al. (1972)'s seminal contribution on "The Ages of Me." Among these levels have been the introduction of new assessment instruments, the expansion of experimental and longitudinal work, and new theoretical input (Diehl et al., 2021). Hence, I will outline in the first part major lines of how subjective research progressed and what the enduring research issues including the borderlines to other areas such as age stereotypes or ageism are. Second, major achievements of subjective aging research will be synthesized. Doing so, I will take a closer look at the outflow of experimental work addressing proof of principle mechanisms of how subjective aging may impact on developmental outcomes (see also Wahl & Kornadt, 2022). Next, I move on to the area of subjective and health / longevity outcomes and present our latest meta-analytic effort to synthesize the longitudinal evidence, based on 99 articles, reporting on 107 independent studies (Westerhof et al., in preparation). The conclusion will be that the connection among more negative subjective aging interpretations and increased health risks and reduced longevity is robust. Third, I will turn to issues related to subjective aging and cognitive development in later life. I will summarize the longitudinal evidence on subjective aging and long-term cognitive development such as the work by Siebert et al. (2018a) on normative cognitive development as well subjective aging research addressing cognitive pathology (Levy et al., 2018; Siebert et al., 2018b). Next, I will summarize what we have found in our multidimensional assessment of subjective aging in terms of the construct of awareness of age-related change (AARC) in the cognitive domain as contrasted with other domains. Fourth, I will close with shortly discussing overlap of subjective aging constructs with established constructs such as cognitive complaints and meta-memory work. Fifth, I will consider practical and arguable intervention oriented implications of what subjective aging research and related themes currently are promising.

Prof. Christopher Hertzog

Georgia Tech, Atlanta, United States

A metacognitive intervention to improve everyday cognitive functioning in cognitively healthy older adults

Interventions to enhance cognitive functioning in older adults often focus on either training memory strategies (mnemonics) or brain training exercises as in gamified environments. These training programs typically show little benefit for self-reported memory and cognitive errors in everyday life. We have developed an alternative approach, grounded in metacognitive principles, that seeks to directly change self-management strategies for avoiding problems such as forgetting to take medications or run errands. I describe the rationale for the approach and report on two studies that test its efficacy. The approach has clear benefits for subjective memory, including memory self-efficacy and control. However, our outcome measures assessing everyday cognitive errors showed mixed results. Nevertheless, the results suggest potential promise for the procedures and point to the need to consider how to maintain changes in habits and behaviors that can benefit performance of complex instrumental activities.

Prof. Ann Pearman

Georgia Tech, Atlanta, United States

Vulnerability Profiles: A challenge for metacognitive interventions

The metacognitive intervention approach has great promise for improving older adults' everyday function, but initial results from our studies points to potential issues with compliance with the intervention and realization of intervention benefits in some older adults. Based on clinical work with older populations and observations from participants in our studies, I argue that there are individual differences in who benefits from the intervention and why. Certainly, the intervention requires sufficient cognitive capacity to be able to use mindful self-regulation techniques, and in its present form is not likely to benefit those with mild cognitive impairment or early Alzheimer's disease. However, I argue that other personal characteristics may create vulnerability to everyday cognitive problems and represent barriers to adoption and maintained use of trained metacognitive strategies.

Prof. Stephanie Cosentino

Columbia University, New York, United States

Subjective Cognitive Aging in the context of Alzheimer's Disease

Alzheimer's disease (AD) is expected to affect over 7 million older Americans by 2025. There is increasing evidence that subjective cognitive decline (SCD), the perception of cognitive decline before impairment is evident on testing, is a risk state for AD and a growing public health issue. SCD screening is highly practical: it is fast, easy, non-invasive, inexpensive and adaptable to any setting. However, it is critical to establish the person-specific (e.g., metamemory) and task-specific (e.g., measurement approach) factors which affect the utility of SCD as a pre-clinical disease marker. This talk will address our efforts to optimize SCD measurement for detecting pre-clinical AD, to integrate information on SCD and metamemory, and to evaluate the utility of a brief, SCD screener in a frontline clinical setting.

Language of the event

Presentations and the discussion will be in English.

Poster session

We plan to organise a poster session on issues around subjective aging and metacognition. If you would like to present your current work, please send us a working title for your poster.