Psychosocial Predictors of Self-Perceived Memory and Its Implications on General Health and Neuropsychological Performance


Objective: The current study examines psychosocial predictors of self-perceived memory and its effects on general health and neuropsychological performance in healthy older adults. Method: This study included 365 healthy older adults. Variables included the Rasch Modeled Memory Self-Efficacy Scale, Health SF-12 survey, and Spiritual Well Being Survey. Neuropsychological performance included Trails A/B, Rey Auditory Verbal Learning Test, Symbol Digits Modality Test, Block Design, and Controlled Oral Word Association Test. Results: Results revealed that self-perceived memory was significantly predicted by social support (β = .122, p < .05, CI [-.424, -.171]) and spiritual well being (β = .262, p < .001, CI [.025, .064]). Self-perceived memory complaints significantly predicted general health (β = -.260, p < .001, CI [-.254, -.101]). General Health significantly predicted cognitive performance on Trails B (β = .164, p < .05, CI [3.73, 16.45]). Spiritual well being significantly predicted cognitive performance on Trails A (β = -.112, p < .05, CI [-.388, -.013]), Symbol Digits Modality Test (β = .114, p < .05, CI [.012, .301]), and Block Design (β = .138, p < .05, CI [0.49, .352]. Conclusion: Results suggest that increased self-perceived memory complaints may mirror poor perceptions of general health, which may be a possible sign of future cognitive decline. Proper assessment of memory and health complaints in addition to psychosocial factors may help reduce the negative impact on cognitive functions and possibly assist in the future detection of dementia. However, future research is needed before assessment of these predictors is used in clinical settings.