CORRELATES OF SUBTLE COGNITIVE DYSFUNCTION IN A HIGHLY EDUCATED COHORT OF MID LIFE AND OLDER AFRICAN AMERICANS
Travonia Brown-Hughes1, Alyssa Gamaldo2, Corinne Pettigrew3, and Roland J. Thorpe1, 1. Hampton University, Hampton, Virginia, United States, 2. Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina, United States, 3. Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland, United States

Remote cognitive screening modalities can be an initial step in assessing cognitive health. This cross-sectional study examined how risk and protective factors relate to cognitive performance in non-demented African Americans aged 50 and older. Participants were part of the African American-United Memory and Aging Project (AA-UMAP), a geographically diverse cohort of college-educated adults recruited and evaluated via telephone and online. Demographic, health variables and activity engagement were self-reported through an online survey. Cognition (global cognition, memory, and psychomotor/attention) was measured remotely using the Telephone Interview for Cognitive Status (TICS-40; N = 143) and the CogState Brief Battery (CBB; N = 51). Health variables included a mental health composite (e.g., depression and/or anxiety) and a metabolic conditions composite (e.g.,...
high cholesterol, hypertension, diabetes, and/or obesity). Activity engagement was assessed with self-reported physical, mental, and social lifestyle activities. Linear regression models indicated that older age was associated with slower psychomotor/attention performance (p < 0.01) and marginally lower learning/working memory accuracy (p = 0.08) even after adjusting for covariates (e.g., sex and education). Cognitive performance was unrelated to mental health, metabolic conditions, and lifestyle activity engagement. Neither health-related risk factors nor level of engagement activities were significantly associated with cognitive performance in this remotely screened sample of highly educated middle-aged and older African American adults. More studies of midlife and older African Americans are needed to obtain a more in-depth understanding of the degree to which biopsychosocial strengths and deficits in midlife may affect or alter later-life cognitive trajectories.