Aging, Cognition and the Environment

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Even within a single culture, older adults operate in a different environment than young adults do. Their social and mental worlds are different, and they rely on a brain that is neuroanatomically and functionally different from that of young adults. These environmental differences affect cognition in different ways and in my lecture, I will provide some general information on aging and cognition, along with recent work from my laboratory showing how these differences impact on cognition. I focus on two lines of work, one on circadian arousal differences associated with aging, and the second on age differences in regulation of attention and the consequences for memory and other aspects of cognition that are the product of age-related dysregulation. In this latter part of the talk, I will show both costs and benefits to cognition, that is, ways in which older adults’ performance declines because of dysregulation and ways in which performance is preserved and even enhanced as a result of dysregulation.
References for L. Hasher Riken Institute Seminar, July 2009

(All references can be downloaded.)

See http://www.psych.utoronto.ca/users/hascherlab/publications.htm

1. For a brief introduction to Inhibitory Theory:


2. For a brief empirical paper showing consequences of reduced inhibitory regulation:


3. For an overview of research on aging and memory:


4. For an overview of the impact of age differences in circadian arousal patterns on cognition: