

physical health. From another perspective, older adults may also engage in certain activities to promote specific outcomes (e.g., emotional) in service of psychological well-being. Such findings highlight the adaptive significance of activity selection and engagement processes. Using a variety of approaches, the presentations in this symposium focus specifically on goal-based and motivational factors that may facilitate or impede such processes. Moored and colleagues examine adaptive characteristics—including motivational ones—of individuals whose activity patterns are protective against dementia. Using longitudinal data from the Health and Retirement Study, Lothary and colleagues explore the degree to which intrinsic motivation to engage cognitive resources mediates the effect of personal resources (e.g., physical and emotional health) on participation in challenging everyday activities. Growney and colleagues present research demonstrating that subjective perceptions of difficulty affect decisions to engage in challenging activities, but that such perceptions may reflect biases associated with negative aging attitudes as opposed to actual effort expenditure. Finally, Lind and Isaacowitz examine selection associated with affective aspects of the activities, finding that both middle-aged and older adults exhibited similar biases toward positive activities in congruence with emotion-regulation goals, though age differences were observed in non-affective aspects of the activities. The discussion by Hertzog will highlight common themes.

AGING STEREOTYPES MODERATE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COSTS AND DISCOUNTING

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Aging is associated with normative declines in cognitive resources that increase the costs associated with mobilizing resources in cognitively demanding activities. Selective Engagement Theory (Hess, 2014) hypothesizes that changes in costs influence the motivation to engage in such activities in everyday life. We used an economic discounting task to examine the relationship between both objective estimates (systolic blood pressure responses) and subjective estimates (NASA Task Load Index) of cognitive costs in 78 older adults' (ages 64-85) decisions to engage in more or less demanding activities. Perceptions of costs were meaningfully tied to actual costs (SBP), but further influenced by personal or primed attitudes about aging. Interestingly, decisions to engage in demanding activities—as reflected in discounting decisions—were less influenced by effort expenditure in the activity than by perceptions of difficulty. These results underscore the role that negative stereotypes play in undermining motivation to engage in potentially beneficial activities.

EXAMINING WHETHER LIFESTYLE ACTIVITY PATTERNS PREDICT DEMENTIA INCIDENCE AMONG COMMUNITY-DWELLING OLDER ADULTS

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Engagement in lifestyle activities can be neuroprotective, but it remains unclear what aspects of engagement are most beneficial. Examining activity patterns may better characterize both quantitative (e.g., number) and qualitative (e.g., characteristic/motivational) differences in engagement. We used a novel, latent class analysis (LCA) to characterize subgroups with distinct activity patterns and examined whether they have differential risk of incident dementia. We compared these findings to models including standard activity frequency and variety metrics. Using the Ginkgo Evaluation of Memory Study (N=3,069), we fit Cox regressions of each activity metric on time to dementia, adjusting for intervention group and demographics. For the LCA, we derived group/class indicators for Cox regression. Variety predicted incident dementia and will be compared to LCA activity metrics in predicting risk. Activity metrics that are most protective against dementia inform intervention design. Unlike standard activity metrics, LCA may further identify subgroups with common motivations to sustain activity.

MOTIVATION AS A MECHANISM: THE LONGITUDINAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERSONAL RESOURCES AND ACTIVITY ENGAGEMENT

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Past research has demonstrated an association between health and cognitive resources, intrinsic motivation, and activity participation in older adulthood, both cross-sectionally and from a daily perspective (e.g., Queen & Hess, 2018; Hess et al., 2018). This highlights the potential importance of motivation as a mediator of the impact of changing personal resources on engagement in cognitively beneficial activities. This study expanded on prior research by examining these relationships longitudinally in a large representative sample of adults over 50. Specifically, we used data from the Health and Retirement Survey (N = 5600) to create two 4-year longitudinal assessments, with multi-level structural equation modeling used to test the mediating role of motivation on everyday activity engagement. Consistent with expectations from Selective Engagement Theory (Hess, 2014), motivation served as a partial mediator of the impact of changing resources on engagement, with the effect being selective based on the cognitive demands of the activity.

THE ROLE OF AGE AND EMOTION REGULATION IN CHOICE OF EMOTIONAL ACTIVITY IN EVERYDAY LIFE

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Situation selection is a form of activity selection focused on the affective tone of potential choices. We investigated this type of emotional activity selection in everyday life during a longitudinal multi-burst study of middle-aged and older adults. In each burst, participants were asked to complete six phone-based assessments per day across five consecutive days, including a situation selection question about what type of emotional situation they would want to engage