

Internet Use and Cognitive Functioning in Late Adulthood: Longitudinal Findings from the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE)

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Abstract

Objectives

Research suggests that cognitive functioning is associated with technology use in late life, but longitudinal research in this domain is still sparse. This study explored the reciprocal association between Internet use and cognitive functioning over a 2-year period.

to explore the "reciprocal association" means to investigate whether older people's INCREASED Internet use is what leads to their BETTER cognitive functioning OR whether older people having BETTER cognitive functioning is what leads to their GREATER use of the Internet.

Method

We analyzed representative data across 14 countries from the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE). The sample included 29,576 participants between 50 and 100 years of age. We used data from 2013 (Wave 5) and a 2-year follow-up in 2015 (Wave 6). Participants provided information on cognitive functioning measures and Internet use at both time points.

Results

Cross-lagged panel analysis indicated reciprocal effects between cognitive functioning and Internet use. Internet use had a greater impact on cognitive functioning than vice versa.

greater

Discussion

This study sheds light on the direction of the association between cognitive functioning and Internet use. Findings indicate that using the Internet positively affects cognitive functioning in late life.