

Sex differences in episodic memory for public events: a male advantage?

Saturday, September 13, 2025 3:30 PM (15 minutes)

Memory differences between men and women have been a research topic for some time: Rubin et al. (1999) found no sex differences in the distribution of autobiographical memories throughout life, their significance, the ratings assigned to them, or the knowledge of events. The only exception they found was that men scored higher than women on factual questions about current events and baseball.

Our goal was therefore to replicate this pattern of results, while also exploring in greater depth whether demographic variables such as age and education might play a role in these outcomes. For this purpose, we conducted a study with 260 participants: 153 females (mean age: 50.2, SD: 18.4, mean schooling years: 15.0, SD: 3.91) and 107 males (mean age: 48.0, SD: 17.3, mean schooling years: 15.9, SD: 3.64). The Episodic Memory for Public Events scale of the MA-SELF (Autobiographical Memory of the Self) was administered: this scale is composed of 32 items divided into four subscales (2005/2009, 2010/2013, 2014/2017, 2018/2021).

We explored the influence of sex, age and education on episodic memory for public events performance, through a series of Generalized Linear Models (GLM) using the Gamma probability distribution with the inverse link function. Results showed that sex, schooling years and age play a significant role in the total score of the episodic memory for public events performance. Moreover, men tend to perform better than women, but this result is affected by age and schooling, and it varies depending on the test subscales.

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Old and new perspectives on the study of human memory (id #578)

If you're submitting a symposium, or a talk that is part of a symposium, is this a junior symposium?

Yes

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Session Classification: Old and new perspectives on the study of human memory

Track Classification: Memory