

The positive effect of preserved cognition in subjective cognitive decline: a longitudinal study

Saturday, September 13, 2025 2:10 PM (20 minutes)

Recent longitudinal studies emphasise the importance of early indicators of cognitive decline, such as subjective cognitive decline (SCD), which is associated with a higher risk of cognitive impairment. Our aim was to investigate the cognitive and behavioural changes in individuals with SCD over time.

18 individuals with SCD (both women and men) aged 60 years and older were recruited from the local community. They underwent a multidimensional neuropsychological assessment both at baseline (T0) and after approximately 12 months (T1). The presence of SCD was confirmed using the Jessen's criteria (2020) and the Cognitive Function Instrument (CFI), which includes both self- and partner-reports. Parametric and non-parametric analyses were performed taking into account the data distribution.

Compared to T0 (13 women, age: 72.28 ± 5.18 ; education: 12.94 ± 3.75), participants showed significant differences at T1 (age: 73.39 ± 5.27) in: Beck Depression Inventory (BDI, $U=118.5$; $p=0.047$), Lookup7+ ($t=-2.39$; $p=0.028$) and CFI partner-report ($t=2.38$; $p=0.029$).

At T1, participants showed similar performance on almost all cognitive tests, which is consistent with the stable trajectory of SCD in healthy older adults. In addition, we observed an improvement in depressive symptoms and general health as well as a decrease in their partner's perception of cognitive decline. These results may suggest that awareness of preserved cognition leads to an improvement in mood (BDI), general health (Lookup7+), but also in the observer's perception of cognitive difficulties (CFI partner report).

Future studies with larger samples are needed to replicate these results and validate this positive effect.

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Primary authors: VITALI, neri (università degli studi di Torino); CIPRIANI, Giuseppina Elena (Università di Torino); MOLFESE, Sara; DILETTO, Paolo (Università degli Studi di Torino); MANCO, Cristiano (Università degli studi di Torino); AMANZIO, Martina (Dipartimento di Psicologia, Università di Torino)

Presenter: VITALI, neri (università degli studi di Torino)

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