Medical Characterization of Cognitive SuperAgers: Investigating the medication profile of SuperAgers

Janessa Engelmeyer, Alice Kerr, Beth Makowski-Woidan, Nathan Gill, Hui Zhang, Lee Lindquist, Emily Rogalski

Northwestern University, Mesulam Center for Cognitive Neurology and Alzheimer’s Disease, Chicago, IL. Janessa.engelmeyer@northwestern.edu

Background: Traditionally, aging has been associated with a decline in cognitive functioning - especially episodic memory. Northwestern University’s SuperAgers are a cohort which defy the traditional trajectory of cognitive decline. The cohort is comprised of a group of individuals aged 80 years and older with episodic memory comparable to those in their 50’s or 60’s. This unique cohort has been studied for more than 10 years with the goal of identifying factors contributing to superior memory performance beyond the 8th decade. This study extended our work by exploring medication use between SuperAgers and cognitively average older adults with similar demographics.

Methods: Linear regression models, controlling for covariates such as race, gender and age, were used to analyze total medication use between 96 SuperAgers and 46 cognitively average older adults. Logistic regression models were used on the same individuals to analyze differences in consumption rates of individual medication classes.

Results: SuperAgers and their peers have similar medication profiles. On average both SuperAgers and cognitively average controls with similar demographics take between 3-4 prescription medications.

Conclusions: Differential medication profiles cannot fully account for the memory performance differences between SuperAgers and their cognitively average peers.