Abstracts in National and International Congresses

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Title:

Patterns of Cognitive Performance in Healthy Ageing in Northern Portugal: A Cross-Sectional Analysis

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Cognition, ageing, education, institutionalization

Abstract

Platform Communication

Background: The Minho Integrative Neuroscience Database (MIND)-Ageing project aims to identify predictors of healthy cognitive ageing, including socio-demographic factors. In this exploratory analysis we sought to establish baseline cohorts for longitudinal assessment of age-related changes in cognition.

Methods: The population sample (472 individuals) was strictly a convenient one, but similar to the Portuguese population age profile. Participants older than 55 years of age were included if they did not present defined disabling pathologies or dementia. A standardized clinical interview was conducted to assess medical history and a battery of neuropsychological tests was administered to characterize global cognition (Mini Mental State Examination), memory and executive functions (Selective Reminding Test; Stroop Color and Word Test; and Block Design subtest of the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale, WAIS). Cross-sectional analysis of the neuropsychological performance with individual characteristics such as age, gender, educational level and setting (retirement home, senior university, day care centers or community), allowed the establishment of baseline clusters for subsequent longitudinal studies.

Results: Based on different socio-demographic characteristics, four main clusters were identified that group distinctive patterns of cognitive performance. The type of institution where the elders were sampled from, together with the level of formal education, revealed to be the major hierarchal factors for individual distribution in the four clusters. Of notice, education seems to delay the cognitive decline that is associated with age in all clusters.

Conclusions: Social-inclusion/engagement and education may have a protective effect on mental ageing, although this effect may not be effective throughout ageing.