

Primary Care Fact Sheet on the Impact of Lifetime Education, Physical Exercise and Psychosocial Stimulation on Intellectual Function

1. Most elders describe themselves as “well” despite physical, social or neuropsychiatric deficits.
2. Higher, early lifetime educational achievement is associated with a diminished risk for late life dementia.
3. Each older human may have individual cognitive reserves that might protect against cognitive decline.
4. Animals raised with environmental enrichment will show enhanced markers for neuronal vitality.
 5. Animal models for amyloid production show that environmental enrichment will reduce amyloid load in the rodent brain.
6. Regular exercise may diminish the risk of cognitive decline in human elders.
 7. Midlife obesity is a risk factor for late life dementia.
8. Passive intellectual activities, such as watching television, may have minimal protective benefits for the aging brain.
 9. Social and leisure activities may be highly beneficial for cognitive protection in the older individual.
10. Available scientific data suggests that lifetime intellectual and physical activity may reduce the risk for dementia in later life or delay the onset of symptoms.