Keeping Our Brains in Shape: The Exploration of the Relationship Between Aerobic Exercise, Cognitive Training, and Cognitive Decline

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Older adults (ages 55-75 years) were given a baseline cognitive assessment, which consists of a battery of memory and attentional control tasks, in order to determine their initial level of cognition. Then they were given aerobic exercise training, cognitive training, or a combination of the two followed by cognitive assessments over the span of one year to measure any changes in their cognitive ability. Tasks within the cognitive assessment, like the Prospective and Retrospective Memory Questionnaire, the Logical Memory task, and the Virtual Week game, address one or more of three important areas of cognition: prospective memory, retrospective memory, and task coordination. Data collection is ongoing, so preliminary analysis has not yet been conducted. Ideally, the results will support the hypothesis that a combination of aerobic exercise and cognitive training will have an additive effect on the maintenance, and potentially augmentation, of cognitive ability during old age.