Memory—how it works & normal age-related changes

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Memory self-efficacy during menopause

Clinic Sample from Royal Women’s Hospital, Melbourne

130 women aged 40-60

• 36 Premenopausal
• 54 Perimenopausal
• 40 Post menopausal

Exclusion – NESB, induced menopause, neurological disease/injury, drug/alcohol addiction

Research Team: Dr Anne Unkenstein, A/Prof Christina Bryant, Prof Fiona Judd, Prof Glynda Kinsella,
Have you experienced poor memory in the past month?

- Whole Sample: 72%
- Pre: 61%
- Peri: 82%
- Post: 68%
Memory complaints

Multifactorial Memory Questionnaire Ability Subscale


Consists of 20 common memory lapses

E.g. In conversation, have difficulty coming up with a specific word that you want
Not recall the name of someone you just met

Participants rate the frequency of their memory lapses over the past 2 weeks

5 point scale from 0 (All the time) to 4 (never)

Higher score = less frequent reported memory lapses (Score range 0 – 76)
Note: MMQ = Multifactorial Memory Questionnaire
Lower score = more frequent reported memory lapses
\( p < .05 \)
Most frequent memory lapses

Not recall the **name** of someone you just met

In conversation, have difficulty coming up with a specific **word** that you want

Forget what you were just about to do; for example, walk into a room and forget what you went there to do

Have trouble remembering a telephone number you just looked up

Leave something behind when you meant to bring it with you

Have trouble remembering details from a newspaper or magazine article you read earlier that day

Have trouble **concentrating**

Forget what you were going to say in conversation

Lost my train of thought

Forget to buy something you intended to buy
Memory Contentment

Multifactorial Memory Questionnaire Contentment Subscale


Consists of 18 statements about feelings people may have about their memory

E.g. I am concerned about my memory
     When I forget something, I fear that I may have a serious problem, like Alzheimer’s disease

Participants rate the degree to which they agree with each statement (their feelings over the past 2 weeks)

5 point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree

Higher score = greater memory contentment (Score range 0 – 72)
Note: Multifactorial Memory Questionnaire
Lower score = less contentment with memory
\( p < .05 \)
Feelings about memory

My memory is really going downhill lately

I feel **unhappy** when I think about my memory ability

I am **concerned** about my memory

I have hidden my memory problems so others would not notice

I am **embarrassed** about my memory ability
Predictors of memory contentment for the perimenopausal group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>MMQ Contentment</th>
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<tr>
<td>MAS</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.31</td>
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<tr>
<td>BDI</td>
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<td>.07</td>
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<td>STAI Trait</td>
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<td>-.05</td>
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<td>-.09</td>
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<td>-.17</td>
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<td>MENQOL</td>
<td>-.30</td>
<td>-.12</td>
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Vasomotor

Overall Model \( R^2 = .37** \)

- \( p < .05; ** p < .01. \)

**Note.** BDI = Beck Depression Inventory; STAI = Spielberger State Trait Anxiety Inventory; MENQOL = Menopause Specific Quality Of Life Questionnaire; PSQI = Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index; MAS = Menopause Attitude Scale; MMQ = Multifactorial Memory Questionnaire
THE BRAIN AND ITS AMAZING FUNCTIONS

- Alcohol
- Shopping
- Money
- Blog
- Movies
- Opinion
- Real Estate
- Cars
- Twitter
- Facebook
- Celebrities
- Take Away Food
- Commentary
- Travel
- Email
- Football
- Coffee
Senses

Working memory

Recent memory

Remote memory

Forgetting

See Drag L & Bieliasuskas M, J of Geriatric Psychiatry & Neurology, 23(2) 75-93, 2010
Forgetting

Senses

Working memory

Recent memory

Remote memory

Forgetting

See Baddeley A et al., Memory, Psychology Press, 2009
Forgetting

Working memory

Recent memory

Remote memory

Encoding

Retrieval

Forgetting

It's on the tip of my tongue!

See Shafto M et al., J of Cognitive Neuroscience, 19(12), 2060-70, 2007
Prospective memory

See McDaniel M & Einstein G, Neuropsychologia, 49, 2147-55, 2011
A properly functioning memory system must be as good at forgetting as it is at remembering.

See Baddeley A et al., Memory, Psychology Press, 2009
Forgetting

Working memory

Recent memory

Remote memory

Forgetting

See Drag L & Bieliauskas M, J. of Geriatric Psychiatry & Neurology, 23(2) 75-93, 2010
Autobiographical memory

See Drag L & Bieliauskas M, J of Geriatric Psychiatry & Neurology, 23(2) 75-93, 2010
Canberra was designed by:

a. JJC Bradfield  
b. Jorn Utzon  
c. Walter Burley Griffin

Semantic memory

See Drag L & Bieliauskas M, J of Geriatric Psychiatry & Neurology, 23(2) 75-93, 2010
Procedural memory

See Nilsson L, Acta Neurol Scad, 107 (Suppl 179), 7-12, 2003
Episodic/Autobiographical
Semantic/General Knowledge
Procedural
Wisdom/intuitive problem solving
- Sleep
- Pain
- Alcohol
- Medications
- Hormones
- Stress
- Grief
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Overload
- Change of routine
- Attitude
to paying attention!
KEEP CALM AND DO IT NOW REMEMBER IT LATER
“I forgot to make a back-up copy of my brain, so everything I learned last semester was lost.”
Memory overload - download in progress.
How to manage your memory

Understand how memory works

Be aware of age-related memory changes

Work on health & lifestyle factors that could make your memory fluctuate

Pay attention to paying attention!

Use memory strategies

Adjust your expectations
remembering well

HOW MEMORY WORKS
AND WHAT TO DO
WHEN IT DOESN'T

NEW EDITION expanded and updated

Delys Sargeant & Anne Unkenstein

'A superb self-help book'
—Geraldine Doogue