Cognition in Vascular Aging and Mild Cognitive Impairment.

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Cardiovascular health declines with age, due to vascular risk factors, and this leads to an increasing risk of cognitive decline. Mild cognitive impairment (MCI) is defined as the negative cognitive changes beyond what is expected in normal aging. The purpose of the study was to compare older adults with vascular risk factors (VRF), MCI patients, and healthy controls (HC) in main dimensions of cognitive control. The sample comprised a total of 109 adults, aged 50 to 85 (M = 66.09, S.D. = 9.02). They were divided into three groups: 1) older adults with VRF, 2) MCI patients, and 3) healthy controls (HC). VRF and MCI did not differ significantly in age, educational level, or gender as was the case with HC. The tests used mainly examine inhibition, cognitive flexibility, and working memory processing. Results showed that the VRF group had more Set Loss Errors in drawing designs indicating deficits in establishing cognitive set and in cognitive shifting. MCI patients displayed lower performance in processing. Hence, different types of specific impairments emerge in vascular aging and MCI, and this may imply that discrete underlying pathologies may play a role in the development of somewhat different profiles of cognitive decline.

Glykeria Tsentidou has completed her studies in Psychology at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in 2010, while in 2013 she received a Master's Degree in Clinical Neuropsychology from the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. In 2015 she was accepted as a doctoral candidate, she has since been involved in research into the risk factors for dementia and the reduction of complex cognitive functions. Her study is funded by the State Scholarship Foundation of Greece together with EU funding: plan "Human resource development, education and lifelong learning (2014-2020)".

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