



Mcl Newsletter



Volume 1

Mills cognition lab
Oakland · California

summer 2009

96 hours of science

Two posters. One conference.

Time is of the essence, and when you have only 96 hours to update yourself on every aspect of psychology as a science, it certainly seems like a daunting yet oddly rewarding task. That is what the members of the Mills Cognition Lab (MCL) had the opportunity to do this Memorial Day weekend in the heart of San Francisco's Downtown in the Marriot Hotel for the 21st Annual Association for Psychological Science (APS) Convention 2009.

It was a great opportunity to exchange ideas with the prominent minds from all over the world on all aspects of the most up-to-date psychological research. MCL prepared two posters under Dr. Chung's direction: [The Positivity Effect: Is it a Cohort Effect?] and [The Basis for Emotional Enhancement in Women]. The Mills Prieto Lab for multimedia provided the printing of the posters. MCL had the honor of attending various symposiums on aging, one sponsored by the National Institute on Aging (NIA) on emotion regulation in older adults and another on new interventions for productive aging.

For all members of MCL, the chance to present a year's worth of work at an established conference was a rich and rewarding experience to aid in our growth as future psychologists.

- Sarah Wong



Frishta, Sarah, Jennifer, Ekaterina, & Dr. Chung (from left to right) at the APS Conference 2009

Mind the Age Gap



Mansfield College, Oxford University, U.K.

Do we really become more positive as we age? Our research findings certainly suggest so. This year, I feel especially fortunate to be able to present our exciting research findings at the Association for Psychological Science (APS) in San Francisco and at the Times of Our Lives: Making Sense of Ageing conference in Oxford University, U.K. The Times of Our Lives conference is the first global, interdisciplinary conference on aging. Researchers from all over the world and from many different disciplines such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, and medicine, came together to discuss topics related to growing older. Although many people may think of 'aging' as a phenomenon that occurs in the later half of our lifespan, it is truly more than just that. We age everyday from the day we were born and even though subtle, changes are no doubt taking place! The wrinkles on your forehead did not pop up overnight and your baby did not learn how to speak out of the blue. As our life expectancy increases, it has become more important than ever for us to understand issues related to the later stages of life. This conference brought together many perspectives as we tackle this pressing phenomenon in our societies.

-Dr.Christie Chung

The Rossmoor Experience

A common stereotype of old age in Western cultures suggests that as people grow older, they become less happy and dissatisfied with their life. However, many research studies have documented the opposite! In general, older adults tend to be as satisfied with life, if not more so, than they were in their younger years. Also, older adults seem to have better control over their emotions. It seems that years of experience with a range of emotions enable older adults to regulate their emotions much better, which in its turn enables them to be more productive and make more life satisfying decisions.

MCL's experience at Rossmoor, a senior adult community in Walnut Creek, confirms all these facts. We found Rossmoor's population to be very active, generally satisfied with their life, and very supportive of each other. In fact, there is a great sense of community at Rossmoor, which made us feel very welcomed and our testing experience very fun. Many of the participants in our study shared stories from their past and even passed along significant life events. We had great conversations with many of our participants, and we would gladly come back for further studies on the effects of aging on emotional memory!



Sarah, Dr. Chung, and Lou Ann at LeCheval (left to right) after Rossmoor testing.

-Ekaterina Mahinda

Mood induction study

We investigated the underlying mechanisms for emotional memory performance in women using an emotional memory picture task to see whether mood trait (personality) or mood state (how you feel at the moment) would contribute to increased emotional memory in women. We tried to induce either a positive or negative mood by asking participants to write about positive or negative events in their lives. We found a negativity bias in young women's memory (that is remembering more negative information) and that mood trait may interact with emotional memory because depression eliminated emotional enhancement in the negative condition. We also found that our participants remembered more specific negative information and general positive information, so negative information may come to mind faster. This study answered a few of our questions and brought up many more!

- Jennifer Johnson

Positivity effect in old age

Do you think you are more positive than the next generation?

Fortunately, the positivity effect is a cognitive phenomenon stating that older adults tend to remember more positive information than younger adults. We proposed that older adults would remember more positive information because they have been through many unfortunate events and feel their quality of life is better now. Through engaging participants in an emotional picture memory task, older adults recalled more positive pictures than younger ones, thus showing a positivity effect in older adults. Conversely, we did not find any difference in emotional memory tasks of participants who rated their lives better now compared to those who rated their lives as the same or worse. Those who felt closer to their real age remembered more positive information. Thus, the positivity effect in old age may not be a cohort effect after all!

-Frishta Sharifi

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9					2	5		4
7	2		5			6		9
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	4	3		8			2	
	7	9	1		8			
4		6			9		1	2
1		2	6					7

SUDOKU

Each Sudoku has a unique solution that can be reached logically without guessing. Enter digits from 1 to 9 into the blank spaces. Every row must contain one of each digit. So must every column, as must every 3x3 square.

S	U	M	S	A	N	D	A	L	S	J	M	H	E	R
S	T	A	R	U	T	S	W	H	E	N	U	I	T	S
T	H	E	S	G	N	U	M	M	E	M	R	L	S	O
H	A	T	S	U	L	B	I	K	I	N	G	S	Y	T
O	I	C	E	S	A	R	U	D	O	U	O	N	D	T
L	H	E	T	T	W	E	N	R	R	E	L	A	X	T
I	Y	S	S	W	I	M	M	I	N	G	F	S	E	C
D	O	B	T	N	D	O	F	E	O	J	U	N	L	E
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T	W	U	E	N	R	T	Y	S	V	E	C	O	A	N
D	S	E	O	F	S	E	P	T	E	M	B	E	B	R

SUMMER WORD SEARCH

Find the summer words from the bottom in this Summer Word Search grid. The words can be forwards, backwards, vertical, horizontal, or diagonal. Circle each letter separately, but keep in mind that letters in each summer word may be used in more than one word.

Participants Welcome!

If you would like to participate in a new study and/or refer a friend between the ages of 55-90 to MCL, please fill in the section below and mail it back to us. We look forward to working with you on our future studies!

AUGUST	JULY
BARBECUE	RELAX
BASEBALL	SANDALS
BEACH	SHORTS
BIKING	SOCCER
GOLF	SUNBURN
HATS	SUNSCREEN
HOLIDAY	SUNTAN
HOT	SWIMMING
HUMID	VACATION

Please fill out the form and mail to:

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Attn: Christie Chung
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Oakland, CA 94613
Or email us at
mcl@mills.edu

Please include the following person/people in future MCL research studies.

Name: _____ Name: _____

Phone: _____ Phone: _____

If referring a friend, please write your name: _____

Comments or questions: _____

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