



Mental Health Literacy

INVESTIGATORS: Sarah Piper (Honours student), Prof Ian Kneebone (UTS), and Dr Phoebe Bailey

It is widely accepted that an individual will benefit from recognising symptoms of physical illness and knowing what actions to take to prevent or treat the illness. Abstaining from smoking and eating a healthy diet are common preventative techniques.



Honours student, Sarah Piper.

Early warning signs of a stroke or a heart attack are also well known, particularly if an individual has completed a first aid course. The majority of people are aware of appropriate sources of treatment for a physical illness, and what the benefits of those treatments will be. With regards to mental illness, the situation is markedly different. There is less public knowledge about the prevention and recognition of mental disorders, and more uncertainty about how to

seek treatment, or assist others in seeking treatment.

Although adults over 60 years exhibit high rates of mental disorders relative to adults younger than 60 years, mental health literacy is poorer in the older age group. Older adults are less likely to receive the treatment they need, and are more likely than younger adults to delay seeking treatment, resulting in negative outcomes.

The aim of this study was to understand demographic and cognitive factors that might contribute to reduced mental health literacy in older age.

We found that increasing age was associated with reduced recognition of post traumatic stress disorder and chronic schizophrenia, but not depression or social phobia. We also found that an age-related decline in cognitive processing was associated only with reduced understanding of schizophrenia. It may be that this is the condition that older adults are least familiar with, or at least that they find most difficult to process. Lastly, we found that, among older adults, already knowing someone with a mental health problem was associated with better literacy across all of the mental health categories that we presented.

Need help? Call Lifeline on 13 11 14



You are receiving this newsletter because you generously volunteered your time to participate in our research here at Western Sydney University (formerly University of Western Sydney).

This is our second annual Newsletter to let you know about the research we have been conducting over the past year, as well as our plans for the coming year. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or comments.

Best wishes,

Dr Phoebe Bailey

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Tel. 02 9772 6230



Australian Government
Australian Research Council

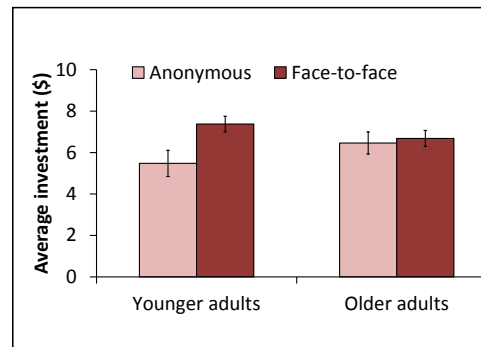
We wish to acknowledge financial support from the Australian Research Council

GROUP STUDY RESULTS

A whopping 168 participants signed up for this study across seven group testing sessions. The older participants were aged 65-93 years, and the younger group were aged 18-33 years.

In a financial investment task, we found that the two age groups did not differ in how much money they trusted one another with. This tells us that, contrary to the popular stereotype of the overly trusting older adult, young and older adults' trust levels, at least when investing money in a one-off investment with a stranger, do not differ. This fits with recent data showing that older adults are not more susceptible than younger adults to scams and fraud.

Another notable finding was that young adults trusted others more with their money when they were face-to-face than anonymous. Older adults, however, invested the same amount regardless of whether their decision would be anonymous or not. This suggests that we might become less concerned about what other people think about us as we grow older. It might also simply show that we become more honest and less deceptive.



This leads to the third important finding, which was that older adults were more likely than young adults to return money that had been invested with them, at least when they were dealing with others of the same age. This suggests that older adults are the more trustworthy group, but that they might have a bias to be more trustworthy when interacting with other older adults.

The study was published in the American Psychological Association journal, *Psychology and Aging*. The findings were also presented in a talk given by Dr Bailey at the Association for Psychological Science annual convention in New York in March, 2015, and were further reviewed in a chapter on prosocial ageing that is now in press:

Bailey, P. E., Slessor, G., Rieger, M., Rendell, P., Moustafa, A., & Ruffman, T. (2015). Trust and trustworthiness in young and older adults. *Psychology and Aging*, 30, 977-986.

Ebner, N. C., Bailey, P. E., Horta, M., Joiner, J., & Chang, S. W. C. (in press). Multidisciplinary perspective on prosociality in aging. In J. Somerville & J. Decety (Eds.), *Social Cognition, for the Frontiers in Developmental Science Series* (Psychology Press | Taylor and Francis Group).

A special thank you to all who participated in these extra-long testing sessions. I especially enjoyed sharing the light lunch with you at the end and hearing your impressions of our research.

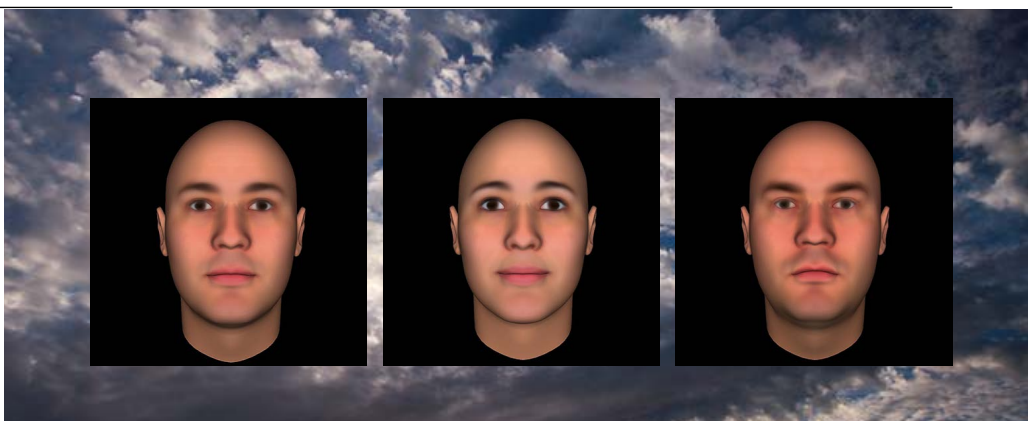


WOULD YOU TRUST THIS FACE?

In this study we asked participants to imagine how likely they would be to trust someone with their camera or to approach them for directions. Some of the photos of the people being judged were computer-generated to appear more or less trustworthy (see examples right).

We found that, relative to young adults, older adults rated all of the faces as less trustworthy and less approachable. Interestingly, when providing the same ratings for photos of real faces, the two age groups did not differ in how trustworthy or approachable they considered the faces to be.

These findings have important implications for the design of future digital assistance technologies. Older adults are more likely than young



Older adults are more likely than young adults to prefer interacting with faces that appear more realistic than computer-generated.

adults to prefer interacting with faces that appear more realistic than computer-generated. This may relate to the increased familiarity with these types of images among younger generations.

ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT RETIREES



Thank you to the Association of Independent Retirees for inviting us to speak at one of your gatherings in Peakhurst. Rebecca and I enjoyed meeting you all and sharing some of our research.

Phoebe Bailey & Rebecca Pinkus

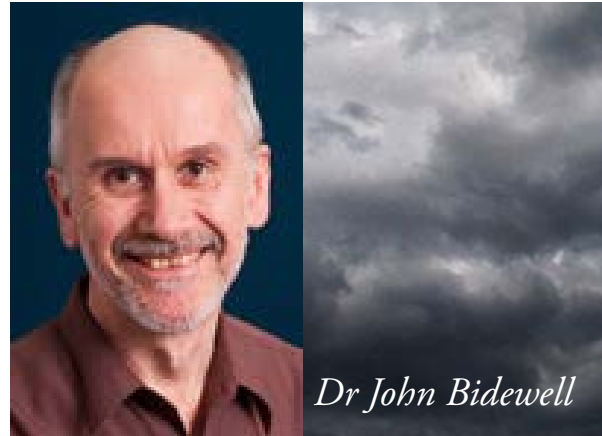
DELAY DISCOUNTING

INVESTIGATORS: Dr Phoebe Bailey and Dr John Bidewell
(Western Sydney University School of Science and Health)

Most people say that they would rather receive \$100 now than \$120 in a year, even though the latter reward is larger. In fact, there is a strong tendency to devalue future rewards in many aspects of life, from a child eating one marshmallow now instead of waiting to receive three a little later, to an adult having a holiday instead of putting money away for retirement. This tendency to give reduced weight to an outcome given its location in the future is known as delay discounting

Evidence suggests that discounting either remains intact or declines in older adulthood. A decline would usually suggest increased patience and self-control or reduced sensitivity to immediate rewards as we grow older.

We wanted to test whether trust that a reward would actually be received in the future would also contribute to delay discounting, and whether this might differ with age. Given that older adults are sometimes more willing than young adults to trust an untrustworthy character, we also wanted to test whether they might be more willing to wait for a reward from someone untrustworthy. This would reveal a downside to any reduction in delay discounting with age.



Dr John Bidewell

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When deciding whether to wait for a larger reward from someone untrustworthy, we found that the size of the reward was almost meaningless. That is, there was not much difference in the willingness to wait for \$300 versus \$900, indicating that participants did not trust that the reward would be received. The good news is that there was also no effect of age on these decisions. Young and older adults were equally wary of promises made by untrustworthy characters.

WHY IS GAMBLING BECOMING MORE POPULAR WITH OLDER ADULTS?

INVESTIGATORS: MICHELLE MAIUOLO (Summer intern), TARREN LEON (Summer intern), GÜLTEN BENDEK (Summer intern visiting from University of Hagen, Germany), DR PHOEBE BAILEY, AND PROF CRAIG GONSALVEZ

Worryingly, research shows that older adults are increasingly taking up gambling, and especially poker machine gambling. Based on theories of increased positivity with age, we tested whether older adults would respond more positively than young adults to wins and fake wins (i.e., wins that amount to less than the original wager).

In our study, young and older adults were given 1000 credits (i.e., \$10) to bet with (10 credits per bet) on a simulated poker machine. They completed two blocks of 80 bets each that consisted of 15% wins (60 credits), 15% fake wins (5 credits), and 70% losses.

We measured skin conductance response and heart rate in response to these various outcomes. This showed that heart rate increases regardless of outcome type, and that these increases are larger for young than older adults. Averaged across age group, skin conductance response was greater following a win than a loss, but did not differentiate losses and fake wins. The age groups also did not differ in self-reported enjoyment or excitement. This tells us that increased positivity and excitement are not likely to account for increased gambling uptake among older adults. On the contrary, older adults experience reduced arousal when playing the pokies. This research now needs to be extended to include older adults who report being regular gamblers or who experience problem gambling.

Our Summer Interns presented these findings at the 2015 Australasian Psychophysiology Conference



Professor Craig Gonsalvez

Leon, T., Bailey, P. E., Maiuolo, M., Benedek, G., & Gonsalvez, C. (2015). Age-related differences in physiological responding to simulated electronic gambling. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*. Conference Abstract: ASP2015 - 25th Annual Conference of the Australasian Society for Psychophysiology. doi: 10.3389/conf.fnhum.2015.219.00005

Maiuolo, M., Bailey, P. E., Leon, T., Benedek, G., & Gonsalvez, C. (2015). Autonomic responses to electronic gambling wins and losses of equivalent magnitude. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*. Conference Abstract: ASP2015 - 25th Annual Conference of the Australasian Society for Psychophysiology. doi: 10.3389/conf.fnhum.2015.219.00004

specialist help

Gambling Help provides a range of specialist services that can assist people with specific needs. These are all free of charge.

SPECIALIST COUNSELLING SERVICES	PHONE NO
Arab Council Australia	02 9709 4333
Co-As-It (services for the Italian speaking community)	02 9564 0744
Multicultural Problem Gambling Service (many languages)	1800 856 800
Chinese Language Service (Hornsby)	02 9477 9567
Vietnamese Community in Australia	02 9727 5599
Warrui Gambling Help (Aboriginal-specific program)	1800 752 948
Sydney Women's Counselling Centre	02 9263 5577
Wesley Community Legal Service	1800 858 858

The Gambling Help phone counselling service can also arrange for an **interpreter in any language**. Just call 1800 858 858 and tell them which language you prefer.

Print materials in many different languages are available through the Gambling Help website.

We're here to lend a helping hand

Offering support to problem gamblers that's free, effective and confidential.

1800 858 858
www.gamblinghelp.nsw.gov.au

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[facebook.com/gamblinghelpnsw](https://www.facebook.com/gamblinghelpnsw)
[counselorsamt.wordpress.com](https://www.counselorsamt.wordpress.com)

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WHY IS GAMBLING BECOMING MORE POPULAR WITH OLDER ADULTS?

Honours Students Michelle Maiuolo and Alison Woods

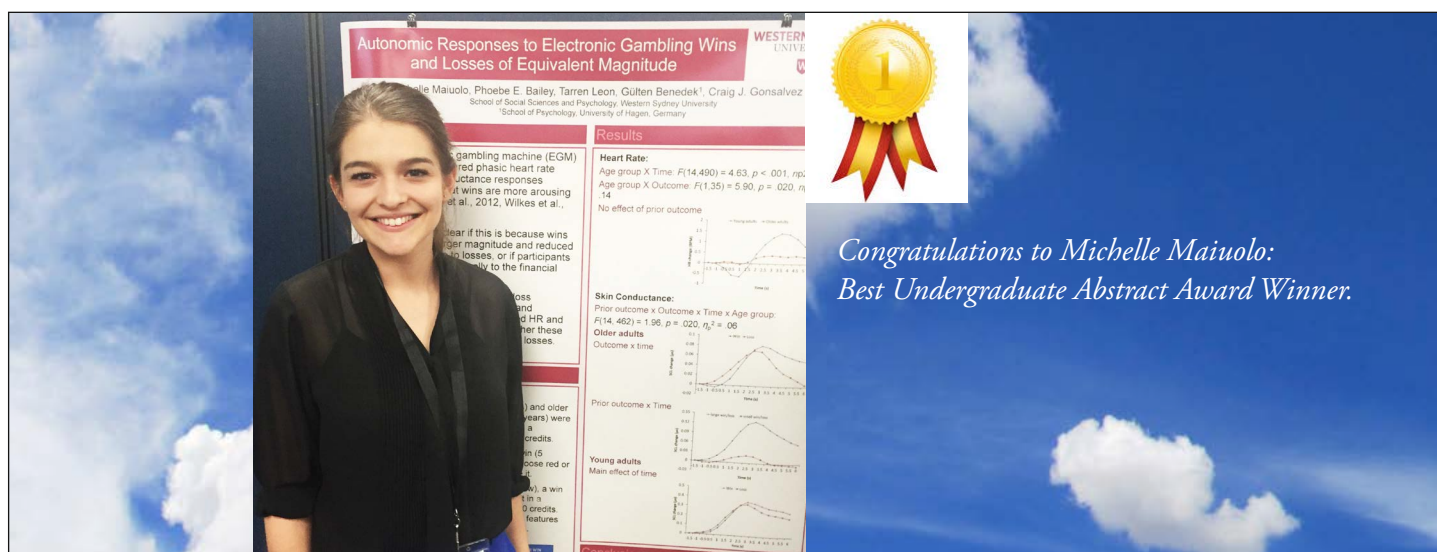
Woods, A., Bailey, P. E., & Gonsalvez, C. (2015). Phasic arousal during gambling: A comparison of younger and older adults. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*. Conference Abstract: ASP2015 - 25th Annual Conference of the Australasian Society for Psychophysiology. doi: 10.3389/conf.fnhum.2015.219.00019

Maiuolo, M., Bailey, P. E., & Gonsalvez, C. J. (2015). Electromyographic evidence for the valence of electronic gambling responses in young and older adults. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*. Conference Abstract: ASP2015 - 25th Annual Conference of the Australasian Society for Psychophysiology. doi: 10.3389/conf.fnhum.2015.219.00037

Michelle and Alison also gave excellent talks at the conference.



Investigators, left to right: Tarren Leon (summer intern), Dr Phoebe Bailey, Michelle Maiuolo (Honours student), Alison Woods (Honours student)



BROOKE BRADY AGE-RELATED DIFFERENCES IN EMOTION REGULATION SUCCESS

Brooke is a PhD candidate working under the supervision of Dr Phoebe Bailey, Professor Ian Kneebone, and Prof Craig Gonsalvez. Her research interests are in emotion regulation and mindfulness across the adult lifespan.



*Brooke Brady
PhD Candidate*

Summary of Brooke's Research


Age-related differences in emotion regulation success

Emotional experiences and perceptions change across the lifespan. Older age is associated with a shift in motivation away from individualistic goals such as the attainment of knowledge and wealth, and a shift toward more emotionally meaningful goals, such as strengthening close relationships. Older age is also associated with equal, if not greater, overall emotional wellbeing. The present body of research seeks to understand age-related differences in the use of specific emotion regulation strategies. If age-related differences exist, identifying strategies of particular utility for different age groups has important implications for informing clinical practice. The identification and testing of new strategies, such as mindfulness-based emotion regulation, also offers a significant new contribution to the current field of ageing and emotion research.

@phoebebailey


For more information about psychology and ageing research you can follow me on Twitter @phoebebailey

Or send me an email
p.bailey@westernsydney.edu.au



... to everyone for so generously volunteering your time to participate in our studies. It wouldn't be possible without your support. Please feel free to pass our details on to anyone who you think might also be interested.

We are always in need of new volunteers.



NEW VOLUNTEERS ALWAYS NEEDED

We are always looking for new volunteers aged **65 and over**.

To volunteer or to find out more about our new studies:

Tel. Phoebe **9772 6230**
or Email
p.bailey@westernsydney.edu.au

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