INTRODUCTION

- Prior research suggests age-related differences in the perception and response to COVID-19.
- Older adults have shown to perceive events more positively, known as the positivity effect, even in the setting of a pandemic.
- Other influences to COVID-19 response often fell along partisan lines and may have shaped the way individuals remember an unprecedented time in history.

Objective: Examine the effect of age and degree of political affiliation on the number of positive versus negative memories recalled at the start of the pandemic.

METHODS

1. Participants: 334 older adults (60+); 370 younger adults (18 - 35) in the United States
2. Recruitment: Online sample via Amazon Mechanical Turk from May through June 2020
3. Measures: Age, Political Affiliation, Positive and Negative Memory Questionnaire

RESULTS

- A significant interaction of age by liberalism predicted the number of positive memory details, $p = .046$.
- As scores on liberalism increased, older adults in comparison to younger adults, experienced a greater increase of positive memories recalled by 1.035.
- There was a significant main effect of liberalism on negative memory details, $p = .006$.
- There was no significant interaction of age by liberalism or a main effect of age on negative memory details.

DISCUSSION

- The positivity effect was observed in older adults who were more politically liberal and the memories recalled during COVID-19.
- Future research should investigate whether more positive memories leads to better mental health outcomes.

REFERENCES


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