

THE COGNITIVE AGING AND MEMORY LAB

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Happy Fall!

We hope this newsletter finds you and your family in good health during these times. As for many, the COVID-19 virus has drastically changed how we conduct daily operations in the CAM Lab. Unfortunately, we have not had in-person research participants in the lab since March 2020, however that has not stopped us from conducting new and exciting research! Although we do miss our daily in-person interactions with participants, we have been finding new ways to answer the research questions that the CAM Lab aims to explore. Read on for more info on what we've been up to recently!



New Paper Published on Individual Differences in Cognitive Offloading!



What is cognitive offloading?

Even if you are not familiar with the term 'cognitive offloading', odds are you engage in this behavior in your everyday life quite a bit! Cognitive offloading is when an individual performs a physical action in order to reduce the cognitive demands of a task. For example, imagine you are at the doctor's office and make a follow-up appointment for two weeks time. To remember this, you write the appointment time and date in your calendar... This is cognitive offloading!

Why is cognitive offloading important?

Cognitive offloading is important to study as research suggests it can help individuals improve their ability to accurately store and retrieve important information, such as your doctor's appointment! However, everyone is different and may not engage in cognitive offloading behaviors in the same way. We wanted to explore how cognitive offloading differs between individuals and whether these individuals show an advantage in memory.

What we found

We found that for higher memory loads (having to remember large amounts of information), engaging in cognitive offloading increased performance on a short-term memory task.

What does this mean?

This research sheds light onto how people may engage in compensatory behaviors to increase working memory loads. This is important as it offers potential techniques that people can use to increase their memory and forget less doctor appointments!



Our Lab Members!



We have many new faces in the CAM Lab...
Meet our lab for 2020-2021!



Principal Investigator
Dr. Lauren Richmond



PhD Student
Timothy Brackins
Cognitive Science Program



PhD Student
Katie Burnett
Cognitive Science Program



Lab Manager
Julia
Kearley



Post-Baccalaureate Researcher
Santhosh Koduri

Undergraduate Researchers



Kylie Fried
Psychology Major (B.A.), pre-health track



Nikitha Menon
Biology and psychology major on the pre-med track



Jackie Ho
Psychology major (B.A.), minoring in computer science and digital media



Amanda Truppo
Psychology major (B.A.), minoring in medicine, health and society



Joli Vidal
Majoring in psychology (B.S.) on the pre-med track



The Social Connection Project



During this time, when social distancing is critical in order to protect ourselves and each other from COVID-19, it can be difficult to engage in the social interactions we are accustomed to. This is especially true for those living in assisted living and nursing homes. In addition to this, to protect residents many assisted living and nursing homes have closed their doors to friends and family visiting residents until further notice. Given these changes, it is common for residents to feel down and isolated at this time. To combat this, the **Stony Brook University Aging Interest Group** has extended an initiative started by the Gerontological Society of America to send cards and messages to residents to let them know that we are thinking of them during these times. To date, Aging Interest Group has collected **207 cards** to distribute to assisted living and nursing home residents in and around the Stony Brook community!

This initiative is open to anyone and is a great way to help out in our community. In line with COVID safety recommendations, we will be sending virtual cards. If you would like to send a virtual card, please follow the information below:

- File size should be less than 10MB
- To make the card, you can write a message on a word document, write an email, make a drawing, send a photo or take a picture of a physical card you made... use your imagination!
- The message can include anything from a personal story about yourself to some encouraging words! However short or long is up to you

Email all submissions to:

psychology_scottlab@stonybrook.edu

For more information visit the [Aging Interest Group](#) website.



Virtual Talks on Ways to Improve Your Memory!



Principal Investigator of the CAM Lab, Dr. Lauren Richmond, has been offering virtual talks that focus on ways to improve your memory. Memory is a fickle thing and there are many evidence-based tips and tricks that can improve your memory functioning in everyday life!

If this sounds interesting to you and you'd like to schedule a virtual presentation with Dr. Richmond, please email:

lauren.richmond@stonybrook.edu



Grant Announcements and Future Research

The CAM Lab is excited to announce that we have been involved in several successful grant applications this year! See below for funding agency and title for our recent awards.

- ▶ **The Office of the Vice President for Research and the Institute for Engineering-Driven Medicine COVID Seed Grant-** Effects of The Coronavirus Pandemic on the Academic, Career, Mental, Psychosocial and Physical Functioning of the SBU Community
- ▶ **The National Science Foundation Rapid Response Research Grant-** Effect of The Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic on the Psychosocial, Emotional, Academic and Career Functioning of Academic Communities
- ▶ **National Institute of Health Grant-** A Life Course Approach to Integrating Trauma and Cognitive Aging: A Cohort of 9/11 Responders
- ▶ **Office of the Vice President for Research Seed Grant-** Investigation of the Protective Effect of Social Connections on the Neurobiological Underpinnings of Memory in ageing

Yes, We Are Still Conducting Studies!

New Research in the CAM Lab!



Our lab has adapted to the conditions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Although we greatly miss our daily interactions with our participants, we have been able to continue our research by utilizing online platforms that can be completed from your own computer at home!

We are always recruiting participants to take part in our research. If you would like to sign up to participate, [CLICK HERE](#).

If you would simply like to learn more about our lab and the studies we are currently conducting, please email: cogagingmemorylab@gmail.com

**We hope to be back in action in the
lab soon but until then...**



**Click [HERE](#) to visit
our lab website!**