Good education might improve memory but won’t stop you forgetting things

A HIGHER level of education might give you a better memory but it does not slow the rate of its decline, a study has found.

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People with higher levels of education had better baseline scores

Researchers at University College London (UCL) measured the cognitive ability of more than 11,000 Europeans aged 65 and over from 10 countries.

Participants' ability to use their memory was tested when they entered the study, with the result known as their baseline score.

The participants, sorted by the number of years they had spent in education, were retested every two years over an eight-year period to measure any decline in their memory.

The study found that people with higher levels of education had better baseline scores, meaning they had better memories than their counterparts with lower levels of attainment.

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Those with high and low education levels saw their memory decline at the same rate over 8 years

But those with high and low education levels saw their memory decline at the same rate over the eight years.

The study asked participants to recall a 10-word list to test their ability to immediately recall information.

They then had to recall the information again after five minutes. and book an appointment with the doctor

The scores accounted for factors that could affect performance, such as income, health, gender and age.

Dr Dorina Cadar, the study's lead author, said: “At a country level, variation in cognitive performance has rarely been investigated in healthy European older individuals.

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Education remains a strong indicator of cognitive function in later life

“Despite significant differences in educational systems across countries, education remains a strong indicator of cognitive function in later life, but this study shows we are less clear on whether education can stop the declines in cognition that come naturally with ageing.

“What we do not know is whether those with lower education in this study had poorer memory at baseline because they have had poorer memories their whole lives, or because they have already experienced some declines in their memory performance due to ageing.”

The study, published in the journal Neuroepidemiology, was funded by the Medical Research Council and Alzheimer's Society.