



Memory Self-efficacy Mediates the Relationship between Self-rated Health and Optimism among Chinese Older Adults

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Dear Editor-in-chief

Optimism is defined as individuals' expectations of receiving good outcomes in the future (1, 2). A growing body of research has suggested that increasing optimism will result in older people's high quality of life (1,2). Recent studies also underscored the important role of memory self-efficacy in promoting older adults' positive affectivity (3). Memory self-efficacy refers to people's belief about their capability of using the memory effectively in different situations (3). Older adults with high memory self-efficacy were satisfied with their current life (3). Another factor consistently linked to older people's well-being is self-rated health (3). Older people's life satisfaction was strongly affected by their subjective health levels, and this positive relationship was mediated by memory self-efficacy (3). Though research has uncovered the process by which high self-rated health exerts its positive effect on life satisfaction among older adults, no research has further examine the relationships between self-rated health, memory self-efficacy, and optimism among older people, despite the fact that optimism has found to largely determine older people's quality of life (1,2).

This study tested the hypothesis that memory self-efficacy mediates the relationship between self-rated health and optimism among 182 Chinese older adults aged between 62 and 78 yr. The

Institutional Review Board approved this study, and every participant signed the inform consent. The Memory Self-Efficacy Scale and the Life Orientation Test were administered to the participants. One item was used to measure participants' self-rated health (3). The questionnaire response rate was 84.1%. The significance of the mediating effect was tested by a bootstrapping method (4). That is, 5000 bootstrapping samples were drawn with replacement from the original dataset, and then a 95% bias-corrected bootstrapping confidence interval (95%CI) of the indirect effect was constructed. All the analyses were carried out with *Mplus* 7.0.

Memory self-efficacy predicted older adults' optimistic belief in a positive direction when controlling for self-rated health ($B=0.14$, $SE=0.07$, $t=2.03$, $P<0.05$). Though self-rated health positively predicted memory self-efficacy ($B=0.32$, $SE=0.11$, $t=2.80$, $P<0.01$), but it did not show a significant association with optimism after controlling for the mediator ($B=0.10$, $SE= 1.00$, $t=1.03$, $P>0.05$). The bootstrapping analysis further suggested that the mediating effect was significant (mediating effect=0.04. 95%CI=0.01, 0.09). All these results suggested complete mediation (4,5). Accordingly, these findings supported the important role of memory self-efficacy in promoting older adults' well-being (3). Chinese

older adults who rated themselves as physically healthy had higher memory self-efficacy, which resulted in older adults' high optimism about the future.

Therefore, we recommend that well-being promotion programs, especially quality of life educational programs aimed at enhancing older people's optimistic belief should focus on increasing older adults' positive self-evaluations on their health conditions and their perceived capability of using their memory in different situations.

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