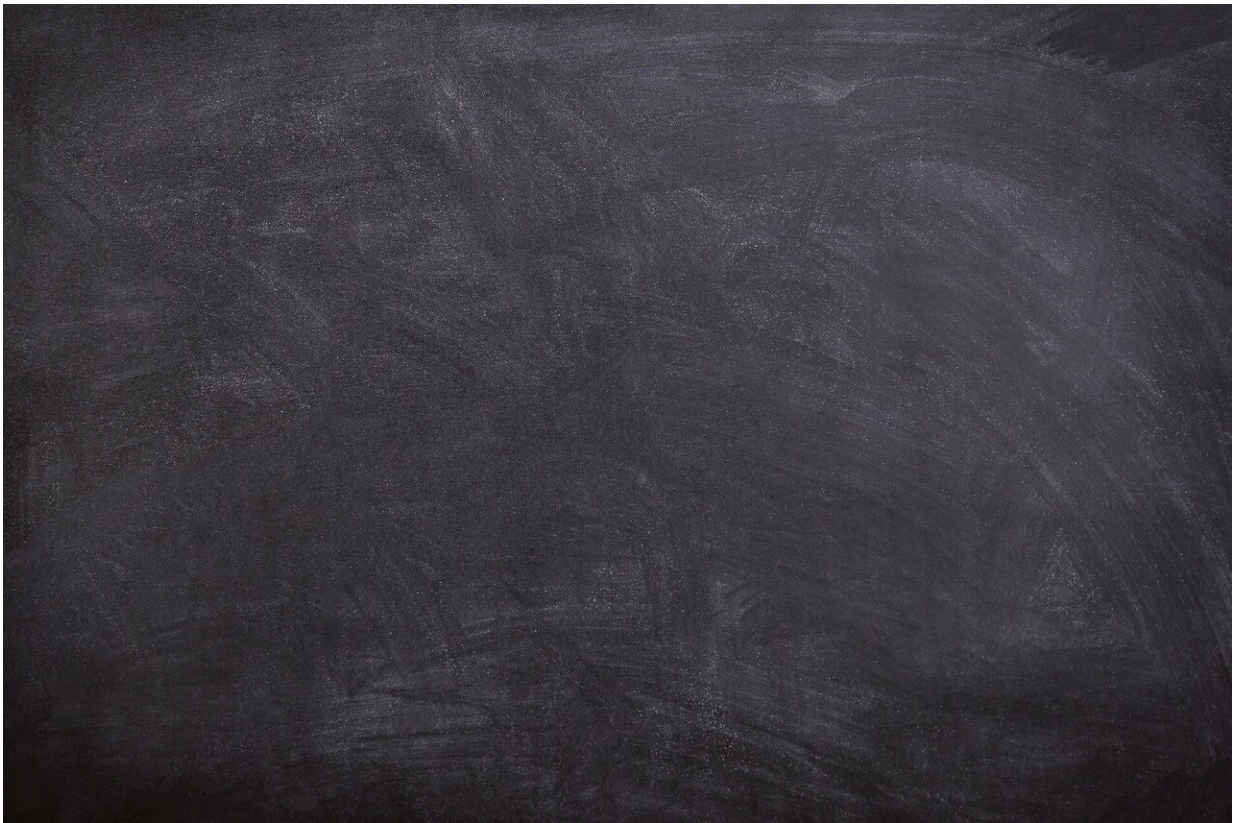


# Does higher education's protection against cognitive decline differ by race and ethnicity?

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In a study of older adults, higher educational attainment seemed to protect adults from cognitive decline, but this protective effect differed by race and ethnicity. Higher-educated White adults received a greater

benefit than higher-educated Black or Latinx adults.

The study published in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* involved telephone assessments of cognitive function among 20,311 Black, Latinx, and White US [adults](#) aged 51–100 years.

On average, Black and Latinx adults scored lower compared with White adults, regardless of educational attainment. Irrespective of race and ethnicity, the rate of [cognitive decline](#) over subsequent assessments was non-linear, and a period of cognitive stability was apparent for those with higher educational attainment. Compared with Black, Latinx, and White adults with lower [educational attainment](#), higher-educated White adults received the greatest protection from cognitive decline, followed by Latinx, and Black adults. Latinx adults experienced cognitive decline beginning at a later age.

"Our findings suggest that efforts to improve access to high-quality education and [social mobility](#) may have long-lasting effects on the risk of cognitive decline in older age," said corresponding author Dylan J. Jester, Ph.D., MPH, of the UC San Diego School of Medicine and the VA Palo Alto Health Care System.

**More information:** Impact of Educational Attainment on Time to Cognitive Decline among Marginalized Older Adults: Cohort Study of 20,311 Adults, *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* (2023). [DOI: 10.1111/jgs.18340](https://doi.org/10.1111/jgs.18340)

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