Effect of cardiovascular and metabolic disease on cognitive test performance and cognitive change in older adults.

Abstract:
To examine the effect of cardiovascular and metabolic diseases on initial cognitive test performance and rate of change in three cognitive measures. Prospective cohort study. General practices in six towns throughout Germany. Three thousand three hundred twenty-seven participants aged 75 and older (average 79.7 ± 3.6). Data were collected during home visits every 18 months and included sociodemographic variables, depression, disease status, drug intake, and cognition. Although the presence of transient ischemic attack (TIA) or stroke and diabetes mellitus was related to poor initial cognitive test performance, the presence of those and other far-reaching chronic diseases or a higher disease burden were not related to the rate of change in cognition over time. Diabetes mellitus, stroke and TIA affect cognitive test performance beyond well-known sociodemographic variables and depressive symptoms,
although none of these diseases contributed to cognitive decline over time. In practical terms, prevention and diagnosis of cardiovascular and metabolic diseases may be essential to cognitively healthy aging.