

Announcement

Janina Krell-Roesch, PhD, and Yonas E. Geda, MD recipients of the 2022 Alzheimer Award

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The Journal of Alzheimer's Disease (JAD) is pleased to announce that Janina Krell-Roesch, PhD, and Yonas E. Geda, MD., are joint recipients of the 2022 Alzheimer Award. The award is presented by the journal in recognition of Janina Krell-Roesch and Yonas E. Geda and colleagues' groundbreaking article "Physical Activity and Trajectory of Cognitive Change in Older Persons: Mayo Clinic Study of Aging" [1]. It is freely available to everyone to read, download, and share. The 2022 award is proudly sponsored by IOS Press (www.iospress.com).



Janina Krell-Roesch, PhD, earned her PhD in sport and exercise science in 2013 from the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT), Germany. She then completed postdoctoral training at the Mayo Clinic, AZ, USA (2014–2018). In 2019, Dr. Krell-Roesch returned to KIT and joined the Institute of Sports and Sports Science as a research scientist and faculty. She is also an Assistant Professor of Neurology (Adjunct) at the Mayo Clinic College of Medicine and Science, and an Assistant Professor (Adjunct) at the Barrow Neurological Institute. Her research focuses on lifestyle factors, physical performance, emotional behavior, and technology in the context of aging, mild cognitive impairment and dementia. Dr. Krell-Roesch is a co-PI and investigator on several grants in Germany and the US, including an R01 funded by the NIH. She has published over 40 peer-reviewed manuscripts and has delivered presentations at national and international scientific meetings.



Yonas E. Geda, MD, received Doctor of Medicine degree from Addis Ababa (Haile Selassie) University, Ethiopia then he trained at Mayo Clinic, Minnesota, USA in psychiatry (1995–2000) behavioral neurology (2000-2001) and Biomedical Science (Clinical Research) and subsequently became full-time faculty. He was a full Professor of Psychiatry and Neurology at Mayo Clinic from 2014 to 2020. After 25 years career at Mayo Clinic, in 2020, he made a vertical move as professor and director of Behavioral Neurology and Neuropsychiatry Fellowship Program at Barrow Neurological Institute (BNI) in Phoenix, Arizona, USA. He is a full Professor of Neurology at BNI and a research professor at Arizona State University. Dr. Geda has made original contributions in biobehavioral and life style factors in the context of brain aging, mild cognitive impairment and dementia. Since 2003, Dr. Geda has been a member of the steering committee of the population-based Mayo Clinic Study of Aging that has made landmark contributions to the field of cognitive research. He has won several awards, including the Mayo Brothers Distinguished Fellowship Award (1998), the Laughlin Fellowship Award from the American College of Psychiatry (1999), Mayo Foundation Scholar (2000), the Medal of the City of Marseille, France (2003), the medal of the city of La Ciotat, France (2015) etc. Dr. Geda has given invited talks in USA, France, Norway, Germany, Czech Republic and Ethiopia. He has published over 160 peer-reviewed papers primarily in reputable scientific journals.

Importance of Published Article

In the past, we have demonstrated that physical activity including leisurely walk is associated with a decreased risk of categorical cognitive outcomes, i.e., incident mild cognitive impairment (MCI). MCI is the gray zone between normal cognitive aging and dementia. In the current paper, the exposure of interest was physical activity and the outcome of interest was cognitive trajectory among cognitively unimpaired older adults.

Therefore, we conducted a longitudinal study entitled “Physical Activity and Trajectory of Cognitive Change in Older Persons: Mayo Clinic Study of Aging” in the setting of the population-based Mayo Clinic Study of Aging in Olmsted County, MN. We included 2,060 cognitively unimpaired individuals aged ≥ 70 years who completed questionnaires about engagement in physical activity in midlife (i.e., when they were between the ages of 50 to 65 years) and late-life (i.e., within the last one year of assessment). Global and domain-specific cognitive function (i.e., memory, language, attention/executive function, visuospatial skills) was assessed through neuropsychological testing every 15 months.

Our study showed that older adults experience a decline in global and domain-specific cognitive function over time. However, in persons who were engaging in physical activity, this decline was less pronounced. This observation was particularly true for females. This finding also has implications for clinical practice, i.e., healthcare professionals including physicians and sport science specialists should highlight the importance of physical activity even in old age to promote brain health.

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REFERENCES

- [1] “Physical Activity and Trajectory of Cognitive Change in Older Persons: Mayo Clinic Study of Aging”, Krell-Roesch J, Syrjanen JA, Bezold J, Trautwein S, Barisch-Fritz B, Boes K, Woll A, Forzani E, Kremers WK, Machulda MM, Mielke MM, Knopman DS, Petersen RC, Vassilaki M & Geda YE, 2021, *J Alzheimers dis*, 79(1), 377-388; <https://doi.org/10.3233/JAD-200959>