

# Burnout, Age, and Cognitive Functioning: A Prospective Study with Nurses in Geriatric Care<sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

Geriatric nurses are both ageing and at high risk for developing burnout symptoms. Burnout symptomatology relates to lower job performance and lower care quality. Developing impairments in cognitive functioning might explain such relationships. We examined prospective relationships of burnout symptoms and cognitive functioning (memory and executive functions objectively assessed). We included age as well as several control variables as predictors and searched for interaction effects to explain prior inconsistencies. German nurses ( $N = 191$ ) from geriatric care filled out self-administered questionnaires at the workplace (t1) and performed a comprehensive cognitive test battery in the lab six months later at t2. Results showed expected age effects on executive functions but no relationships between burnout symptoms and cognitive functioning nor any interaction effects with age. Exhausted subjects had a slightly better performance in updating. The nearly robust null findings in this study indicate that the relationship of burnout symptoms and decreased cognitive functioning may be a predominantly clinical issue.

## Keywords

Age – burnout – cognitive functioning – memory – nurse – prospective

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