

032 **A QUESTIONNAIRE STUDY INVESTIGATING
RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PHYSICAL AND MENTAL
HEALTH, REPRESSIVE COPING AND AGEING**

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Objective This study aims to examine the differences in physical and mental health as a result of normal ageing. Repressive coping is a mechanism of the human mind where an individual automatically and unknowingly will avoid negative information generated both internally and received externally. Previous research indicates that repressive coping may increase with age whilst having a detrimental effect on physical health. Therefore, the prevalence of repressive coping by age, the relationship of physical and mental health with age, and the relationship between physical health and repression are key aspects that will be explored.

Method Several different existing psychological questionnaires measuring anxiety, depression and defensiveness will be used. Each questionnaire examines physical or mental health and repressive coping status. The study is cross sectional, and participants will be separated into three categories according to their age.

Results:

1. There was a higher proportion of repressive copers amongst older participants
2. As an individual ages, their physical health declines as the number of physical health problems increases.
3. Anxiety decreases with age.
4. Repressors are more likely to have two or more physical health problems compared to non-repressors.
5. Depression neither increased or decreased with age.

Conclusion Results have shown that the prevalence of repressive copers did increase with age, whilst physical health declined and mental health seemed to improve. Repressive copers also seem to have more physical health problems compared to non-repressive copers. This may be due to a cohort effect or developmental progression but would require longitudinal investigation.