

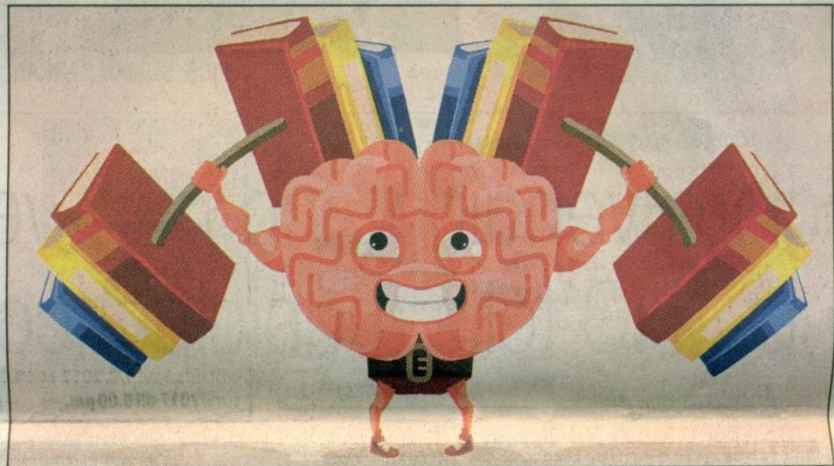
'More education linked to better cognitive functioning later in life'

Higher levels of education help stave off age-related cognitive decline, according to new research published in the journal *Plos One*.

The study, led by researchers at the University of California, Berkeley, examined relationships between educational attainment, cognitive performance and learning in order to quantify the cumulative effect of attending school.

The work, which reviewed the performance of around 196,000 subscribers to Lumosity online brain-training games, is believed to be the largest to date to evaluate cognitive effects of prior educational experience on past and future performance.

Silvia Bunge, a professor of psychology at UC Berkeley professor and her team say higher levels of education are strong predictors of better cognitive performance across the 15- to 60-year-old age range of their study participants, and appear to boost performance more in areas such as reasoning than in



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terms of processing speed. The study's findings are consistent with prior evidence that the brain adapts in response to challenges, a phenomenon called "experience-dependent brain plasticity."

Differences in performance were small for test subjects with a bachelor's degree compared to those with a high school diploma, and moderate for those with doctorates compared to those with only some high school edu-

cation.

"The fact that the cognitive tests were not similar to what is learned in school is a strength of the study: It speaks to the idea that schooling doesn't merely impart knowledge - it also provides the opportunity to sharpen core cognitive skills," said Bunge. Researchers said their findings may be of value to psychologists, sociologists, neuroscientists, education researchers and policymakers. — **EurekAlert**