New Study Shows How to Change Trajectory of Cognitive Decline

Toronto, July 28, 2025 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) — Results from a large study announced today provides those with elevated Alzheimer's risk a new path for changing the trajectory of their brain health. The researchers reported a significant improvement in global cognition from a coached intervention, which used the BrainHQ brain training app from Posit Science, along with guidance on physical exercise and nutrition. The results were simultaneously published in The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) and announced at the Alzheimer's Association International Conference in Toronto.

"This breakthrough result shows that just about anyone at risk for Alzheimer's – and that's most of us – can change the trajectory of their brain health for the better," noted Dr. Henry Mahncke, CEO of Posit Science. "You can adopt a structured set of brain-healthy activities – including brain training with BrainHQ, better nutrition, and regular exercise – and substantially improve cognitive function, rather than face an inevitable future of decline."

The trial, which is the largest to date on whether lifestyle changes can help prevent Alzheimer's disease, was funded by the Alzheimer's Association and enrolled 2,111 older adults (aged 60-79) at elevated risk for Alzheimer's (due to medical and family history) and randomized participants into a coached lifestyle intervention or a health education group for two years.

The first group – referred to as "structured" by the researchers – received at least one monthly coaching session over two years with guidance on using BrainHQ online brain training (15-20 minutes, three times weekly), engaging in aerobic exercise, flexibility, and resistance training (10-35 minutes, eight times weekly), and eating a brain-healthy diet (emphasizing healthy greens and whole grains, adding fish weekly, and choosing healthier snacks). The second group – referred to as "unstructured" – met once every four months and received general encouragement to lead a healthier lifestyle.

The researchers found the structured group improved their cognitive function substantially over the two-year period. The unstructured group improved as well – however the improvements in the structured group were significantly larger. The structured group had gains of a half a standard deviation, which for an average performer at the 50th percentile would mean moving to nearly the 70th percentile

This study is one of the World Wide FINGER studies, based on the 2015 FINGER Study in Finland. That first FINGER study found a lifestyle intervention – focused on brain exercise, physical fitness, diet, and monitoring risk factors (e.g., blood pressure) – improved cognitive function in older adults at risk for dementia.

This new study confirms and extends prior studies of BrainHQ.

The 2024 J-MINT PRIME Tamba study from Japan (using BrainHQ's Japanese version) showed significant gains in cognition even among those at elevated risk of dementia. That study compared three lifestyle interventions from the J-MINT FINGER trial in Japan (diet,

physical exercise, and brain exercise) against a control and found a 41% gain in a standard measure of global cognition in the BrainHQ group. Other FINGER studies underway in Latin America, Australia, Portugal, Holland, and Italy are also using BrainHQ.

In 2020, an Australian study found a lifestyle intervention of BrainHQ, physical activity, and the Mediterranean Diet, as compared to an education control, showed a significant decline in a well-regarded Alzheimer's risk index.

That followed a 2017 report from the 2,832-person, US-based, ACTIVE Study, which looked at 10-year incidence of dementia in participants (average age 74 at study commencement), who had trained a total of just 10-18 hours on a BrainHQ exercise in the first 1-3 years of the study, as compared to two other types of brain training and to a control group. The researchers found only the BrainHQ group had a significantly lower incidence of dementia when compared to the control group – 29% lower overall and 48% lower when looking at the subgroup asked to complete 18 hours of training.

"These results have big implications for everyone with an aging brain," commented Dr. Mahncke, "but also have big implications for policymakers. It's time we acknowledge cognitive decline and dementia aren't inevitable – they're often the result of preventable chronic health conditions. If we implement the right policies at health plans and Medicare, we can encourage more brain healthy lifestyles – saving trillions of dollars and yielding a benefit beyond dollars – more brain-healthy time with loved ones."

BrainHQ exercises have shown benefits in more than 300 studies. Such benefits include gains in standard measures of cognition (attention, speed, memory, decision-making), of quality of life (depressive symptoms, confidence and control, health-related quality of life) and in real-world activities (health outcomes, balance, driving, workplace activities). BrainHQ is used by leading health and Medicare Advantage plans, by leading medical centers, clinics, and communities, and by elite athletes, the military, and other organizations focused on peak performance. Consumers can try a BrainHQ exercise for free daily at https://www.brainhq.com.

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