BioSpectrum
the business of Bio & Health Sciences
ASIA EDITION

We make the best memories by age 25: Research

February 21, 2014 | News | By BioSpectrum Bureau



Singapore: Researchers at the University of New Hampshire (UNH) have found that when older adults were asked to tell their life stories, they overwhelmingly highlighted the central influence of life transitions in their memories. Many of these transitions, such as marriage and having children, occurred early in life.

"When people look back over their lives and recount their most important memories, most divide their life stories into chapters defined by important moments that are universal for many: a physical move, attending college, a first job, marriage, military experience, and having children," said Ms Kristina Steiner, a doctoral student in psychology at UNH and the study's lead researcher.

The research team also included Dr David Pillemer, Dr Samuel E Paul Professor of Developmental Psychology at UNH; Dr Dorthe Kirkegaard Thomsen, professor of psychology and behavioral sciences at the University of Aarhus (Denmark); and Mr Andrew Minigan, an undergraduate student in psychology at UNH. The researchers present the results of their study, "The reminiscence bump in older adults' life story transitions," in the journal Memory.

"Many studies have consistently found that when adults are asked to think about their lives and report memories, remembered events occurring between the ages of 15 to 30 are over-represented. I wanted to know why this might be. Why don't adults report more memories from the ages of 30 to 70? What is it about the ages of 15 to 30 that make them so much more memorable?" Ms Steiner asked.

"Our life narratives are our identity. By looking at life narratives, researchers can predict levels of well-being and psychological adjustment in adults. Clinical therapists can use life narrative therapy to help people work through issues and problems in their lives by helping them see patterns and themes," said Ms Steiner, who studies autobiographical memory.

Ã?Â

Ã?Â