Older adults have shown increases in false memories in long-term memory, which has been linked to the retention of conceptual information but not perceptual details. Older adults do not show the same conceptual memory advantage across time. Young adults have less decay from short- to long-term memory in conceptual memory tasks than in perceptual memory tasks.

**Methods**

- Two age groups
  - 35 young adults (mean age: 19 / range: 18 - 26)
  - 30 older adults (mean age: 69 / range: 61 - 93)
- Asked to remember a series of images
- Tested for:
  - General meaning (conceptual memory)
  - Specific details (perceptual memory)
- Tested either immediately (short-term) or after thirty minutes (long-term)
- Stimuli fell into one of five conditions (27 stimuli/condition)

**Long-term Memory Task**

- View all 81 stimuli for 2 seconds, with a 4 second interstimulus interval
- Tested on 135 images (81 stimuli from study + 54 new) with conceptual and perceptual tasks intermixed

**Short-term Memory Task**

- Combined study & test conceptual trial
- Tested on 135 images (81 stimuli from study + 54 new) with conceptual and perceptual tasks intermixed

**Response Patterns in Long-term Memory**

- Young adults perform more accurately in all but the exact condition
- Young adults perform more accurately because older adults are missing more responses
- No evidence for higher false alarm rates in older adults, possibly due to greater proportion of missed responses

**Conclusions**

Young and older adults have no significant difference in memory during short-term memory tasks, whether it be for perceptual details or conceptual meanings, suggesting that any age deficits do not occur during the initial processing of an event.

There is a similar decay in memory from short-term to long-term memory in perceptual details for both young and older adults.

Young adults have less decay from short- to long-term memory in conceptual memory tasks than in perceptual memory tasks. Older adults do not show the same conceptual memory advantage across time.

There was no evidence of higher rates of false alarms in older adults, possibly explainable by the large proportion of missed responses.