Certain personality traits may affect risk of 'pre-dementia'

3 June 2020

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A study published in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* examined five personality traits—neuroticism, extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness—and their links to pre-dementia conditions called motoric cognitive risk (MCR) and mild cognitive impairment (MCI) syndromes.

Among 524 adults aged 65 years and older who were followed for a median of 3 years, 38 participants developed MCR and 69 developed MCI (some with memory loss, or amnestic MCI).

Openness was associated with a 6% reduced risk of developing MCR, whereas neuroticism was associated with a 6% increased risk of non-amnestic MCI. In non-amnestic MCI, memory remains intact, but one or more other cognitive abilities—such as language, visual-spatial skills, or executive functioning—are impaired.

None of the personality traits were associated with MCI overall or with amnestic MCI.

"While more studies are needed, our results provide evidence that personality traits play an independent role in the risk for or protection against specific pre-dementia syndromes," said lead author Emmeline Ayers, MPH, of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. "From a clinical perspective, these findings emphasize the importance of accounting for aspects of personality when assessing for dementia risk."

More information: Emmeline Ayers et al, The Effect of Personality Traits on Risk of Incident Pre?dementia Syndromes, *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* (2020). DOI: 10.1111/jgs.16424

Provided by Wiley