

Age-related Reductions in the Episodic Specificity of Past and Future Events
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Episodic memory enables individuals to recollect past events as well as imagine possible future scenarios. Evidence from amnesic and psychiatric patients demonstrates that deficits in retrieving past events also extends to future events. While it has been shown that the episodic specificity of past event declines with age, whether the same is true of future events is unknown. In an adapted version of the Autobiographical Interview, young and older participants generated events from four time periods (past few weeks, past few years, next few weeks and next few years). The transcription of each event was segmented into distinct details which were then classified as either episodic or non-episodic. We replicated the finding of an age-related decline in the episodic specificity of past events, with older adults generating significantly fewer episodic details than younger adults. Importantly, this deficit in episodic specificity was also evident for future events. Furthermore, there was no group difference in amount of non-episodic information in either past or future events. These findings converge with evidence from other patient groups and providing further evidence of the close linkage of past and future events.