Reviewer’s report

Title: Older adults with lower autobiographical memory abilities report less age-related decline in everyday cognitive function

Version: 0 Date: 13 Feb 2020

Reviewer: Mohamad El Haj

Reviewer’s report:

The paper (BGTC-D-19-00608) investigates autobiographical memory regarding individual differences in normal aging. This paper demonstrates how complaints of day-to-day memory slips and errors may remain stable or even decrease with age among older adults who report low trait-level episodic autobiographical memory capacity.

There is much to applaud in this work, especially the large sample size (n = 959 older adults) as well as the use of both subjective and objective measures. Some material is provided online (providing high transparency).

I have only one major issue and several minor ones:
- Major issue:
  While the procedures applied strict exclusion criteria, especially regarding history of psychiatric/neurological disorders and while there were some cognitive assessments, it might be that some participants suffered cognitive decline. In the lack of validated cognitive screening (at the very least MMSE/MOCA), we cannot exclude potential cognitive decline in participants, especially that participants were simply invited to indicate whether they had history of psychiatric/neurological disorders. To exclude this potential bias, the authors may wish to provide more details about the cognitive tests (e.g., paired-associations, CFQ), especially how the scores were considered as abnormal compared with standard ones. Alternatively, you may wish to simply acknowledge this issue in the discussion. This is a critical issue, especially that the paper advocates that (page 19, paragraph 1) "this is a non-clinical sample"

- Minor issues
  Abstract: you may wish to define "trait-level memory capacity"
  Keywords: "cognitive reserve" is not defined or even included in the abstract (it comes out of the blue)
  Page 3, paragraph 1: "Normal aging is accompanied by cognitive changes across many domains, especially memory": you may wish to focus on episodic memory as there is little consensus on age-related changes in semantic/procedural memory.

  Page 3, paragraph 2: autobiographical memory is not fairly defined, you may wish to provide a comprehensive definition (e.g., memory of the self, see, Conway, 2005)

  Page 4, paragraph 2: people with "Severely Deficient Autobiographical Memory": it is unclear whether they refer to people with psychiatric/neurological disorders
extensive body of work has documented the contribution of episodic memory processes to many other functions": in younger/older adults?

Page7, paragraph2: can you provide the three catch questions?

Page18, paragraph2: "changes in brain systems supporting memory": what kind of changes?

- A trivial suggestion for future research: any differences regarding gender?

**Are the methods appropriate and well described?**
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Does the work include the necessary controls?**
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess

**Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?**
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?**
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

**Quality of written English**
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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