

Healthy cognitive ageing

Professor Ian Deary



7.30 p.m 12th November, 2014

Biography

Ian Deary is Professor of Differential Psychology at the University of Edinburgh, and Director of the MRC-BBSRC Centre for Cognitive Ageing and Cognitive Epidemiology. He directs the Lothian Birth Cohorts of 1921 and 1936. His research aims to discover the causes of people's differences in cognitive and brain ageing.

[Web site](#)

Abstract

This talk will address the question: why do some people's brains and thinking skills age better than others'? Many of the results are based on our follow-up studies of the Scottish Mental Surveys of 1932 and 1947. Scotland tested the intelligence of the whole nation, twice. In June 1932 it tested 87,498 children, almost everyone born in 1921. In June 1947 it tested 70,805 children, almost everyone born in 1936. In the late 1990s we discovered that the Mental Surveys' data still existed. Since then, we have been calling back people born in 1921 and 1936 to study the ageing of their thinking skills, brains, and bodies. We examine genetics, health, blood markers, lifestyles, and social factors to try to find what contributes to healthy ageing. We sometimes find that our preconceptions of the causal direction between life and thinking skills are wrong, as I shall explain.