Abstract

Picture priming in normal aging and Alzheimer's disease. The present study investigated age invariance for naming pictures and whether implicit memory is spared in Alzheimer's disease (AD). During the study phase, young adults, AD patients, and older controls were shown outlines of familiar pictures. After a distracter task, implicit memory was assessed incidentally. The results showed similar visual priming for the three groups, although young adults responded faster than the two older groups. Moreover, the number of errors was smaller for studied than for nonstudied pictures. This pattern of results was repeated across the three groups, although AD patients produced more errors than young adults and older controls, and there were no differences between these latter groups. These results confirmed previous visual and haptic findings showing unimpaired perceptual priming in normal aging and AD patients when implicit memory is assessed using identification tasks. These results are interpreted from a cognitive neuroscience perspective.