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**Competitive attitudes and psychological and somatic health in old age**

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For a long time, competition in old age has not been a focus of interest for researchers because none of the psychological theories of aging assumed that the motivation to compete persists in old age. The two most prevalent models, the so-called "Deficit Model" (Cumming & Henry, 1961) and the so-called "Integrated Personality Model" (Erikson, 1963), have previously held that the psychological conditions for competition are not present in old age. In contrast, the concept of successful aging (Baltes, 1990), introduced as a consequence of the steady increase in life expectancy, assumes that goals, aspirations, and desires survive into old age.

The research presented here aimed to explore the competitive attitudes of older people, their adaptive nature, and their relationship with psychological and somatic well-being.

### ***Method***

Over 700 older people aged over 65 (average age 72) participated in the study. The online survey included the Competitive Orientations Inventory (Orosz et al, 2018) to assess competitive attitudes and a number of questionnaires assessing somatic and mental health were included. The relationship of competitive attitudes with a number of psychological protective factors (e.g. positivity, resilience, value of life) was also investigated.

### ***Results***

The results show that different patterns of competitiveness are present in the over-65 age group and older people are more likely to be competitive than not. Being highly educated is positively associated with competing, while lower educational attainment is positively associated with avoiding competing. In the older age group, self-improvement competition is associated with better mental health and stronger protective factors. Complex competition is associated with better health, and higher anxiety but strong protective factors. Those avoiding competition, who make up about one-fifth of the combined sample, show the highest pathology and the lowest protective factors.

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