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BACKGROUND

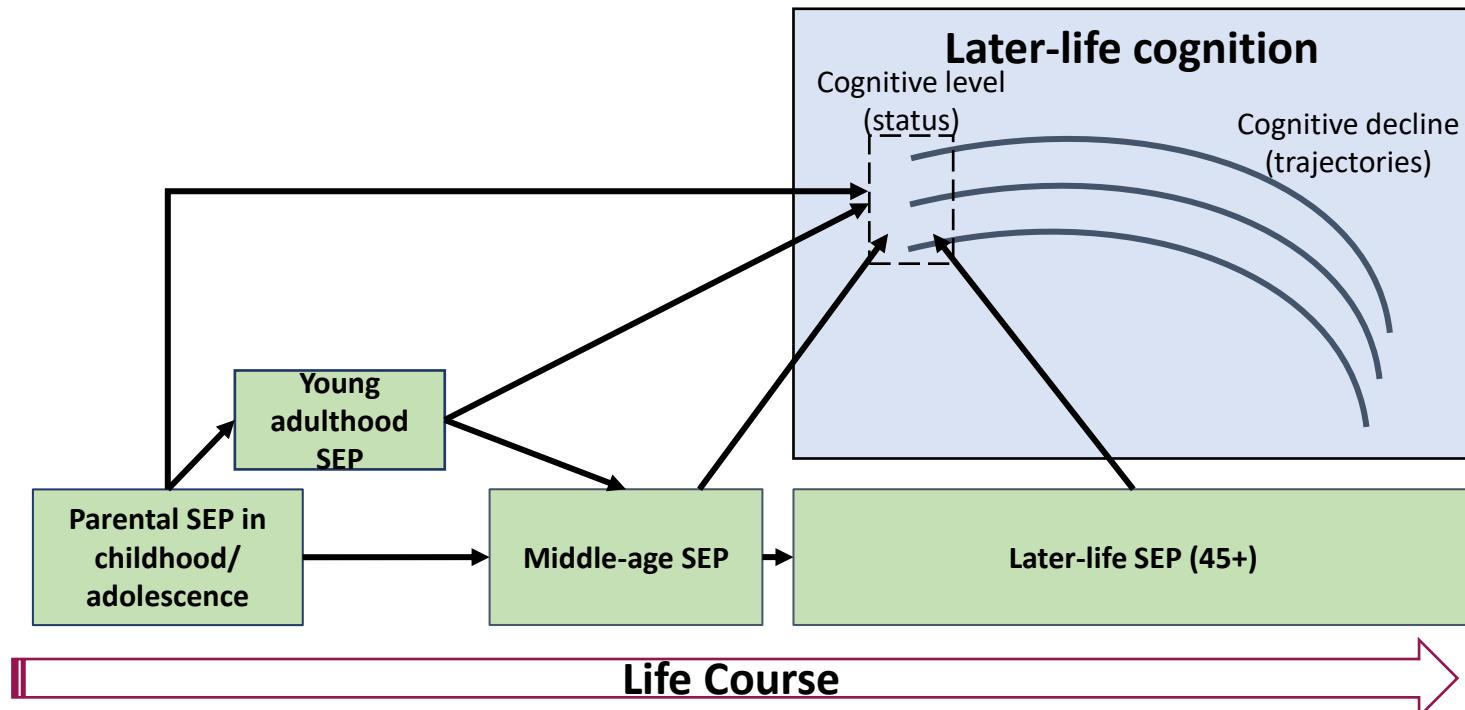
- Low socioeconomic position throughout the life course is linked to poorer cognitive health in later life.
- However, the life course models explaining this association remain debated.

OBJECTIVE

This review aims to advance understanding of inequalities in cognitive aging, using the **life course lens** as a tool for prioritizing public health intervention

METHODS

- Scoping review**
- Inclusion criteria :**
 - observational studies
 - general population
 - cognition measured at age 45+.
 - cognition as a **cross-sectional level, longitudinal trajectory**, and cognitive domains.
- Assessed whether empirical evidence supported life course models (critical/sensitive period, pathway, accumulation).
- 42 studies** included (21 datasets representing **46 countries**)



RESULTS

- Cognitive levels:** associations (robust to confounding and mediating factors) between life course SEP and overall cognition level (and across cognitive domains)
- Cognitive trajectories:** inconclusive associations
- Life course models:** sensitive period, pathway, and accumulation models were **supported** (*critical period model not*)
- Education** was identified as a pathway

KEY MESSAGES

- Socioeconomic position throughout the life course is consistently associated with **cognitive function levels** in later life, but **not with decline**.
- Improving education** has the potential to **cut the link** between early-life SEP and cognitive function levels in later life

