Sociodemographic and Health Factors Influencing Driving Avoidance Among Older Drivers

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1

Driving Is Necessary for Mobility

• Most American communities are spread out

• Private vehicles = the primary mode of transportation (89% of trips)

2

Negative Consequences of Driving Cessation

Negative consequences on social and psychological well-being

Driving cessation
•Increases depressive symptoms
•Decreases out-of-home activity levels
•Reduces network of friends

(Fonda et al., 2001; Marottoli et al., 2000; Ragland et al., 2005; Mezuk & Rebok, 2008).

3

Driving cessation as a process

• Driving retirement process that takes years or even a decade (Dickerson et al., 2007).
• Self-regulatory driving

4

Many Forms of Driving Avoidance

Avoiding driving

• On high traffic roads
• In unfamiliar areas
• Alone
• On the highway
• In bad weather
• At night
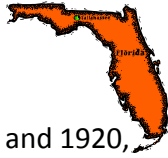• During rush-hour traffic

5

Research Purpose

To identify sociodemographic and health factors influencing night and highway driving avoidance among older drivers.

6

Data

- Florida Disability Study
- A cohort born between 1898 and 1920, living in three retirement communities in Clearwater, Florida
- White working or middle class older adults who migrated from the Midwest

7

Respondents

- The randomly selected sample of 1,000 respondents began as generally healthy and active community-dwelling older adults.
- Residents remain integrated in community activities.
- No access to public transportation: residents mainly drive their private vehicles for mobility.

8

Sample & Analytic Models

- Wave 3 (1992)
- Restricted our sample to those who were driving (N = 562).
- A mean age of 80; 52% female
- Used 2 logistic regression models
- D.V. = night or highway driving avoidance
- Potential risk factors = age; sex; glaucoma; cataracts; cognitive impairment (SPMSQ); self-rated health; transportation support

9

Results

- A higher percentage of older drivers avoided driving at night than on the highway.

- The impact of social and health factors was larger on night driving avoidance than on the highway driving avoidance.

10

Risk Factors for Night Driving Avoidance

	OR	95% CI for OR	p
Age	1.14	1.08-1.20	<.001**
Gender (female)	5.80	3.78-8.92	<.001**
Glaucoma (had glaucoma)	2.20	1.32-3.65	.002**
Self-rated health (5=very poor)	1.67	1.29-2.15	<.001**

Model chi-square statistics=116.51**
df=4; N = 562

11

Risk Factors for Highway Driving Avoidance

	OR	95% CI for OR	p
Age	1.08	1.02-1.14	.006**
Gender (female)	3.42	2.07-5.65	<.001**
Glaucoma (had glaucoma)	2.07	1.23-3.50	.007**
Self-rated health (5=very poor)	1.38	1.04-1.82	<.024*

Model chi-square statistics=43.43**
df=4; N = 562

12

Results

- Female gender, having glaucoma, poor self-rated health, and older age were positively correlated with night and highway driving avoidance.

- **Gender** was the most influential factor for avoiding driving both at night and on highway in this study.

13

Results

- As compared to other factors, the relationship between older age and driving avoidance was weak.

- In the multivariate models, transportation supports showed insignificant relationships with driving avoidance.

14

Limitations and Strengths

- Sample characteristics may limit the generalization of findings of this study to minority elders, lower classes, and those living in urban settings or in multi-generational communities.

- This study shows the gender difference in driving avoidance behaviors and the impact of glaucoma on driving behaviors in later life

15

Thank you!

16