

Medical Risks to Driving Safety & the Aging Driver: Supporting Independence & Easing the Transition to the Passenger's Seat

LUNCH AND LEARN

Presenters:

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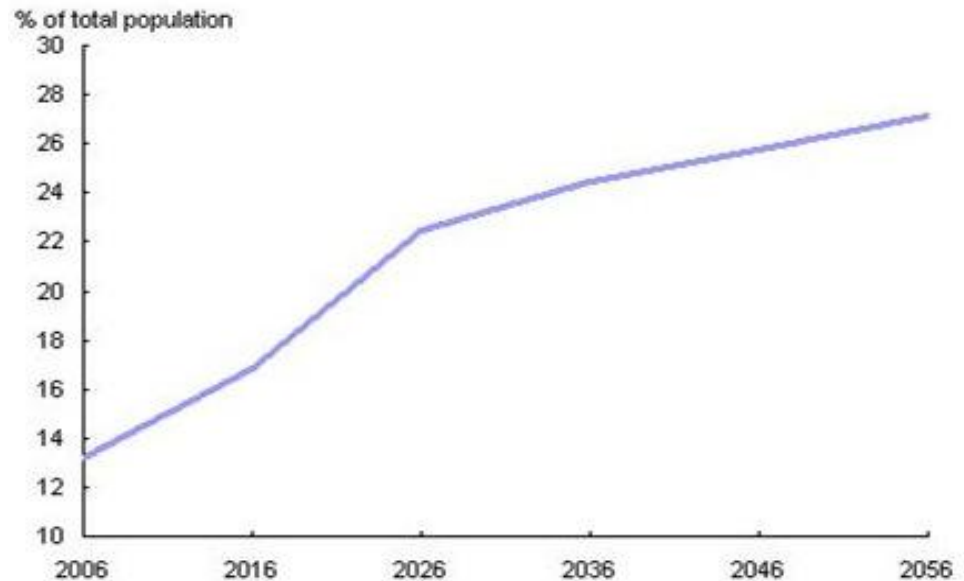
Agenda

- Introduction
- Effects of aging on driving
- Warning signs
- Options and resources
- Conversation Starters

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- AMA Seniors
Transportation
Initiative
 - 2 Parts
 - Lunch and Learn
sessions
 - Former Bus Buddies Programs

Greying Nation and Driving

- In 30 years, the 65+ population will double
- 25% or 10 million Canadians will be seniors
- Currently there are just over 3M 65+ drivers (Turcotte, 2012)



Note: Medium growth scenario.

Source: Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 91-520-XIE.

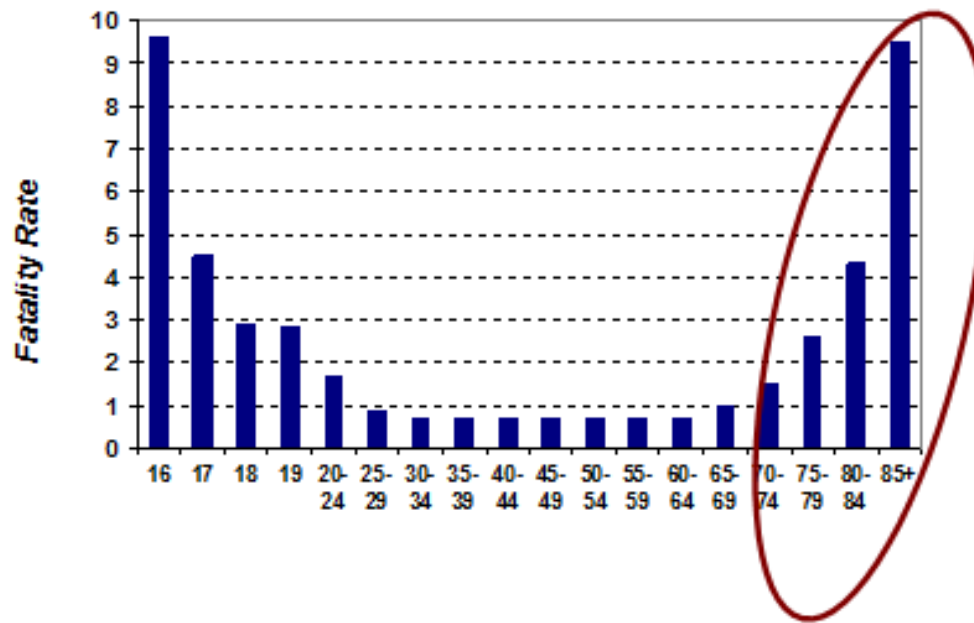
Greying Nation and Driving

According to Turcotte, 2012:

- Alberta (83%) & Saskatchewan (84%) have the highest percentage of licensed drivers age 65+ in Canada
- VEHICLE IS PRIMARY MEANS OF TRANSPORT for 56% of individuals 85+

Crash Rates Based on Exposure

Driver Fatality Rate (per 100 million VMT)



Source: FARS 2001 and NHTSA 2001

Driver Age Group

Driving Ability

- “It’s not IF we can’t drive any longer, but WHEN”

Effects of Aging on Driving

What do you think of re: the effects of aging on driving?



"LET'S GO JUMP IN THE CAR AND DRIVE AROUND AIMLESSLY
AT HALF THE SPEED LIMIT."

Effects of Aging on Driving

- Vision
 - 90% of decisions we make in driving is from our vision (Sivak, 1996)
 - More sensitive to glare
 - Peripheral vision narrows
 - Depth perception declines
 - Difficulty seeing colours
 - Poor contrast sensitivity/visual acuity



Effects of Aging on Driving

- Vision
 - Aging changes the relative transmission of light through the optic media (Olson, Dewar & Farber, 2010)



Age 20



Age 60



Age 75

Effects of Aging on Driving

- Medications
- Hearing Changes
- Reflexes slow
- Reduced flexibility
- Mental changes
 - Decision making
 - Distraction
 - Confusion
 - Memory

Medical Conditions & Driving

- The effects of Medical Conditions on driving can occur at **any** age
- Many are age associated
 - cognitive impairment
- Many can negatively impact the ability to drive
 - Brain injury
 - Dementia
 - Diabetes
 - Stroke
 - Parkinson's



Medical Conditions & Driving

- 32.5% of Seniors (65+) are driving with LEVEL 4 VISION (cannot read newspaper even with glasses)
- 66% are driving with LEVEL 4 HEARING (cannot hear conversation in small group even with hearing aid)

(Turcotte, 2012)

The Role of Physicians

- In Canada, physicians are required by law to report drivers who may no longer be fit to drive in 7 of the 10 provinces and all territories
- Alberta, Nova Scotia and Quebec-discretionary reporting
- Barriers often include fear of damaging physician-patient relationship
- Screening tools available for physicians (eg: SIMARD (Screening for Identification of Medically At Risk Drivers))

Licensing in Alberta

- Medical and eye exam at 75 years
- Medical and eye exam at 80 years
- And every 2 years thereafter

Warning Signs

- Increased anxiety and anger behind the wheel
- Vehicle dents and other minor incidents
- Getting lost or confused
- Compensation – drive slower, avoid night, bad weather, heavy traffic, etc.
- Unaware of driving errors
- Fear of large trucks near you

Warning Signs

- Difficulty merging or changing lanes
- Drifting into across lanes
- Driving on wrong side of road
- Getting lost while driving in familiar locations
- Confusing the gas and the brake pedal

Things to Consider

- Early Planning
 - Many motorists self-regulate
 - Avoid rush hours, driving at night, driving long distances
 - Options available in community
- Sell vehicle – use funds for alternate transportation (up to \$8,000 for mid-size vehicle)
- Move closer to public transportation and amenities

Transportation Options

- Public Transportation
- Family and Friends
- Taxis and private services
- Volunteer drivers

Resources

- Resources
 - AMA
 - The Hartford
(Family Conversations)
 - Saferoads Alberta
 - Medically At-Risk Driver Centre
<http://www.mard.ualberta.ca/Home/index.cfm>
 - Government of Alberta
 - Alberta Driver Fitness and Monitoring
 - AB Driver License Renewal

Preparing for the Conversation

- Do your homework before you speak to a family member, peer or client about significantly restricting (or ending) driving
 - Get the facts – What's been happening that warrants concern?
 - Observe the older driver
 - Discuss your concerns with a doctor
 - Investigate the alternatives
 - Be supportive

Assessing Readiness

Stages of Change (Prochaska, DiClemente & Norcross)

- Pre-contemplation – Denial of problem
 - Increase awareness of the issue
- Contemplation – Recognizes the issue, but is ambivalent re: change
 - Weigh pros and cons, help resolve ambivalence
- Preparation – Getting ready to make changes
 - Needs emotional and logistical support
- Action – Change is made
 - Needs emotional and logistical support
- Maintenance – Sustaining the change
 - Needs ongoing reassurance, support

Enter with Empathy

- Initiate a discussion from a position of *empathy* and care
- Keep conversations focused on care & concern (vs. anxieties & frustrations) – Suspend your *agenda/judgments*
- *Slow down*, listen to *their* concerns, and give space and time for reactions

Having the Conversation

- Start early – talking is a process
- Usually requires more than one conversation
- Elect a family spokesperson, friend or trusted professional – who is most likely to be *heard*?
- Be sure it's someone the driver trusts
- Anticipate emotions
- Choose a place without interruptions
- Allow plenty of time to talk
- Sit comfortably and in non-threatening positions (at same level)
- Be close enough to offer support

Having the Conversation

- Most effective when family members are in agreement about the concerns at hand
- Keep conversation with loved one focused on *your love and concern*, vs. fear, anxiety, frustration, or what “should be” happening
- Avoid falling into old family conflicts/issues
- ***Be prepared for and accepting of potential resistance***

Seeking Outside Support

- The aging driver and family are *not alone*
- Who are the “natural resources” in the family’s life? Who else does the older driver trust? (eg: minister/rabbi/elder, neighbour, close friend, medical professionals)
- Counselling sessions to consult about &/or facilitate the discussion – family members may look to *you as a professional* for this support

Conversation Openers

- Start by supporting safe decisions early on in the process.

“It sounds like cutting down on night driving has worked well for you. I’m glad to hear you’re driving when you feel more comfortable doing so”



Conversation Openers

“Did you hear about the car accident
on the news today?

I heard it wasn't very far from here.”

Conversation Openers

“That was a tough drive from my house to yours tonight. The rain has made the roads slick, and I almost didn’t see a pedestrian on the crosswalk. How do you find it, driving in this kind of weather?”

Conversation Openers

“How did Grandpa stop driving?”

“What did your friend Betty do when she had to stop driving? Sounds like you still see her often.”

Weigh the Pros and Cons

Making a Change (stop driving)	Benefits / Pros	Costs / Cons
Not Changing (keep driving)	Benefits/ Pros	Costs / Cons

Pros and Cons Example

Making a Change (stop driving)	Benefits / Pros <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Comply with the law•Not cause an accident•Could give car to grandson•Save on expenses	Costs / Cons <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Loss of independence•Not able to have control of my schedule•Have to impose on others for rides•Have to admit to myself I have limits
Not Changing (keep driving)	Benefits / Pros <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Have control when I go out•Wouldn't think of myself as dependent•Maintain status quo	Costs / Cons <ul style="list-style-type: none">•My family would be appalled•Risk of causing an accident•I get a ticket or arrested if caught•Could get sued if I caused an accident

Highlight Discrepancies

“Dad, I’ve noticed something lately with the suggested changes to your driving. On one hand you are finding it hard to stick with the driving limitations because it is difficult to find a ride to your coffee meetings, but on the other hand you worry about causing an accident. How does driving with these potential risks affect you and the family?”



Roll with Resistance

“I can imagine it’s frustrating to make these changes with your driving, especially when you have to rely on others for rides and help. I can hear how you want things to go back to the way they were, and I think that’s normal. If you’d like, let’s talk about what is making these changes difficult, and see what we can come up with.”

Express Empathy

“It sounds like trying to arrange a ride every week to your book club and the grocery store is demanding. It can be a lot to sort out, trying to make so many changes at once. How has it been for you? I seems like a it’s had a big impact and I’d like to hear more.”

Support Self-Efficacy

“You have been arranging rides to get to your doctors appointments despite the hassles. It looks like you’ve done well making these changes, even though they felt difficult at first. What’s worked well for you?”

References

The Driving Dilemma, Elizabeth
Dugan, PhD

Your Aging Parent, Maureen Osis,
Judy Worrell, Dianne McDermid

<http://thehartford.com>

Questions?

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