

★ ★ ★ ★ Senior Safety & Mobility

Seniors face serious driving safety and mobility issues.

The Problem

- Due to chronic medical conditions, older adults are often forced to take multiple medications that can potentially impact their ability to drive.
 - Recent survey found that medication use increases with age with 44% of men and 57% of woman aged 65 and older use five or more medications weekly.
 - Over time the number of older adults using multiple medications has increased, proportion using five or more medications increased from 54% in 1998 to 67% in 2003.
- Although older drivers are involved in only a small proportion of all motor vehicle crashes (MVC), they have the highest crash rate per mile traveled. Some studies have shown certain medications to be associated with an increased risk of being in a MVC.
- Number of drivers age 55 and older is expected to increase by more than half by 2030.

The Current Study

- A survey of drivers age 55 and older was conducted by the University of Alabama at Birmingham to assess their knowledge regarding both prescription and over the counter (OTC) medication use and driving.
- Interviews were conducted in Alabama with 630 adults with an average age of 70.4 years from September to December 2007.
- Majority of those surveyed (92%) said driving was their preferred mode of transportation and 60% said they drove six or seven days per week.

Key Findings

- 95% of respondents reported having had one or more medical condition and respondents 75 and older reported the most medical conditions as well as taking the greatest number of potentially driver impairing medications.
- 78% of respondents reported using one or more medications, but only 28% acknowledged some awareness of the potential impact of these medications on driving performance.



- 19% of respondents reported using five or more medications and 12.1% reported taking five or more prescription medications.
- Only 18% had received warning about potentially driver impairing medications - include ACE inhibitors, sedatives, and beta blockers - from a healthcare professional.
 - However, 69% currently use one or more prescription potentially driver impairing medication and 10% said they currently use five or more potentially driver-impairing medications.
 - Of those using five or more potentially driver impairing medications, just 22% said they had some awareness of the potential impact on driving and only 19 percent received a warning from healthcare professional.