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Use of compensatory strategies to enhance older drivers' mobility: Facilitators and barriers

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Objective: This study aimed to explore facilitators, barriers and needs to the use of compensatory driving strategies, i.e. conscious means used to adjust for diminished abilities, which can optimize the community mobility of older drivers.

Methods: An exploratory qualitative clinical research design was conducted with 11 older drivers, 7 relatives and 14 driving professionals. Five focus group discussions were audio recorded, transcribed and analyzed.

Results: Facilitators to the use of strategies are being a woman; perceiving dangers, usefulness of strategies and abilities as diminished; having disabilities or discomfort when driving; experiencing complex driving situations; receiving interventions of relatives and professionals; and having other transportation options. Barriers were unawareness of strategies; pride; lack of self-criticism; reluctance to intervene of relatives and physicians; costs; importance given to driving; complexity of using other transportation options; and lack of proximity to facilities and services. Increasing awareness with TV, radio, newspapers and information sessions about aging changes, community resources, compensatory strategies and their importance for safe driving could foster their use. Furthermore, to support older drivers in changing their driving habits and using compensatory strategies, it is important to involve their relatives and professionals.

Conclusion: While promoting safe driving and the prevention of collisions and injuries on the roads, knowledge about facilitators and barriers to compensatory driving strategies could ultimately allow seniors to optimize their community mobility.

Biography

Levasseur M completed her Bachelor's degree in Occupational Therapy at McGill University, a Master and Doctorate in Clinical research at the Université de Sherbrooke and a Post-doctoral fellowship in health promotion at the Institute of Public Health Research, Université de Montréal. Her research focuses on the social integration and participation of older people living at home, and interventions to promote health, including awareness of safe driving. She is a Fonds de la recherche en santé du Québec (FRQ-S) Junior 1 Researcher (#26815). She has published more than 45 papers in reputed journals and has been guest speaker in up to 45 events.

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