

Older Adults' Perceptions of Transitional Driving Planning & Their Informational Needs

Debra Gibbs, EdD, MHS, OTR/L, FAOTA, CAPS¹, Caitlin Barnickel, Anna Dyduch, Katie Kita, Natalie Metzger, Katherine Rauch²

¹Belmont University, Nashville, TN, USA; ²Belmont University, Nashville, Tennessee, United States

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Primary Author and Speaker: Debra Gibbs, debra.gibbs@belmont.edu

The study aims to explore the perceptions of older adults regarding transitional driving planning and their informational needs. There is a lack of literature reflecting how older adults plan for transitional driving and the types of information they feel are beneficial (Aghaie et al, 2018; Huseth-Zosel, 2018). Age-related declines have been associated with driving deficits (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2018). As the US population of people over 65 increases, the fatalities caused by car crashes have also risen (NHTSA, 2019). Occupational therapists (OT) are qualified to play a vital role in assisting older adults in transition planning. This study used a mixed method design to understand older adult perspectives. Interviews and surveys were conducted at a community center in Middle Tennessee with 19 community-dwelling adults over the age of 60 who were English speaking. Quantitative data was gathered using a survey and analyzed with descriptive statistics. Focus groups were conducted to gather qualitative data to further explore the older adults' experiences and informational needs. Thematic analysis was used to analyze transcripts and identify six themes. Participants stated the importance of driving independence. Additionally, participants reported making driving adjustments to accommodate age-related declines, using family guidance in driving decisions, and desiring autonomy in decisions that impact their driving. Regarding informational needs, participants felt uninformed about driving resources and how to access them. This study shows that older adults are aware of the potential changes in the IADL of driving. The themes revealed psychosocial, environmental, and technological barriers. Driving health, transition planning, and cessation can be addressed by every service provider. Occupational therapists can be community advocates for alternative ride share programs, distribution of driving resources, as well as planners for community events to address safe driving needs.

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