

Contextual Factors & Barriers to Driving Among People With Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis: Research in Progress

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The purpose of this preliminary study is to investigate the contextual factors that affect driving patterns, barriers to driving, and the decision to stop driving for people with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (pALS). People resist giving up driving, even those with declining health. Drivers with neurological disorders, including pALS, have twice the rate of at-fault crashes than controls (Blane et al., 2017). PALS may push the limits of driving safely (Ward & Brooks, 2013). It is difficult to determine when driving becomes unsafe; at some point the decision to stop driving must be made. Socio-economic status, social support, insight and self-regulation, physical limitations may play a role in the decision to stop driving (Blane et al., 2017). The literature exploring pALS and factors affecting driving remain limited or unexplored (Hayes et al., 2020). This study utilizes a mixed method design. Participants are pALS, have history of driving, and able to read and write English. Links posted on social media were used for recruitment. Participants completed an online survey consisting of 3 standardized assessments: the Rasch Overall ALS Disability Scale, Fatigue Severity Scale, Driving Habits Questionnaire, and qualitative questions. Data analysis was done using SPSS. Preliminary results (n=29) indicate statistically significant difference in the severity of ALS for those who were not driving compared to those who were currently driving. Only 6 participants had a driving evaluation. 13% of drivers had 1 accident when they were the driver. Qualitative comments include, 'Driving became too unpredictable and dangerous for me and for the other drivers around me.' This study will inform practitioners on factors that affect safe driving and driving cessation. Consequently, practitioners will be better able to provide appropriate education, recommendations, and interventions to reinforce safe driving, and support for active planning for driving cessation.

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