

**PRODUCTIVE AGING:
DRIVING AND
COMMUNITY MOBILITY**

AOTA Student Conclave
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Defining Community Mobility

- “Moving around in the community and using public or private transportation, such as driving, walking, bicycling, or accessing and riding in buses, taxi cabs, or other transportation systems” (AOTA, 2008, p. 631)

Why Are Occupational Therapists Concerned About Older Drivers?

- Enable engagement in meaningful and purposeful occupations
- Driving is an occupation
 - Defined as an IADL within community mobility
- Driving is an “occupation enabler”
- Older adults experience age and diagnosis related changes that impact driving performance
- Implications of not driving are significant

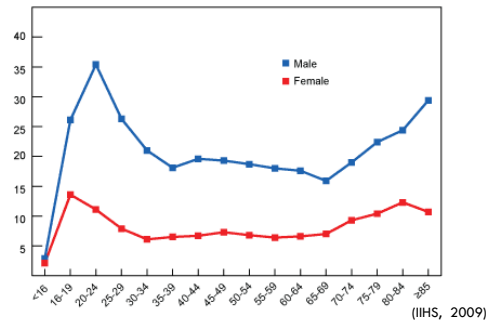
Implications of Not Driving

- Driving is an occupation enabler
 - Interruption in other meaningful activities such as leisure and social participation
- Health and quality of life
 - Access to nutrition, medical care, and socialization
 - Loss of identify, autonomy
 - Increased isolation and depressive symptoms
- Trickle down in community
 - Hinders rides for others
 - Decreased patronage to local business community

Aging Demographics

- 38 million Americans 65 and older
 - 14 million Americans over 65 with some type of long term condition or disability (Waldrop & Stern, 2003)
 - 30 million older licensed drivers in 2006 (NHTSA, 2008)

Passenger vehicle fatal crash involvements per 100 million miles traveled by drive



Role of the Generalist Occupational Therapy Practitioner

- Identify community mobility needs through occupational profile
- Identify valued occupations requiring community mobility
- Recognize risk for crashes / injuries
- Search for local transportation alternatives to meet the client's needs
- Refer for further evaluation

Role of the Specialist Occupational Therapy Practitioner

- Assess/Evaluate for medical fitness to drive
- Make recommendations for continued/ceased driving
- Provide interventions to remediate limitations
- Identify and train in the use of adaptive equipment
- Write prescriptions for vehicle modifications
- Assist in vehicle choice for clients
- Facilitate modified driver licensing (AOTA, 2006, 2008)

Role of the Specialist Occupational Therapy Practitioner (cont.)

- Identify appropriate transportation alternatives
- Provide travel training using transit
- Assist in the application for paratransit
- Evaluate accessibility of transit vehicles, bus stops, and shelters for ADA compliance
- Modify paratransit eligibility process
- Train drivers in use of equipment
- Provide sensitivity training

(OTA, 2006, 2008)

Role of the Specialist Occupational Therapy Practitioner (cont.)

- Collaborate with municipal planning organizations to promote:
 - Multi-user roadway design with bicycle/pedestrian paths
 - Centralized common areas
 - Separation of high risk road users
 - Legible signage with large fonts and symbols
- Advocate for the development of new and more comprehensive medical reporting laws

(OTA, 2006, 2008)

Need for Continued Research

- “We envision that occupational therapy is a powerful, widely recognized, *science-driven, and evidence-based profession* with a globally connected and diverse workforce meeting society's occupational needs.”
- Limited evidence to support practice
- Lack of knowledge about most effective / efficient interventions
- Time to act is now!
 - Partner with researchers
 - Become a researcher yourself 😊

Questions



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