



SPECTRUM HEALTH
The Medical Group



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Dementia: What's Up?

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Navigating Transitions in Later Life

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Dementia: What's Up?

Warning Signs

What to Do to Diagnose

What to Do to Intervene

Special Issues

- Problem Behaviors
- Depression
- Driving

Discussion/Questions

10 Warning Signs of Dementia

1. Memory changes that disrupt daily life
2. Challenges in planning or solving problems
3. Difficulty completing familiar tasks at home, at work or at leisure
4. Confusion with time or place
5. Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships

10 Warning Signs of Dementia:

6. New problems with words in speaking or writing
7. Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps
8. Decreased or poor judgment
9. Withdrawal from work or social activities
10. Changes in mood and personality

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What to Do to Diagnose

- Seek an evaluation
 - Primary Care Physician
 - Neurologist
 - Geriatrician
 - Psychiatrist
- Usual Evaluation
 - Careful history and targeted physical exam
 - Rule out reversible causes
 - Blood tests
 - Imaging

Dementia Diagnosis

Alzheimer's Disease (AD)

Vascular Dementia (VD)

Mixed Type Dementia – AD and VD

Frontotemporal Dementia (FTD)

Lewy Body Disease

Dementia due to Parkinson's Disease

Dementia Diagnosis Characteristics

Executive Function Impairment

- Sequencing
- Problem Solving
- Distraction
- Initiation

Dementia Diagnosis Characteristics

Alzheimer's Disease

- Executive Function Impairment
- Memory

Dementia Diagnosis Characteristics

Vascular Dementia

- Large or intermediate vessel – depends on area of involvement
- Microvascular – executive function and memory, defined motor/sensory with fatigue/stress

Dementia Diagnosis Characteristics

Mixed Type

- Executive Function
- Memory
- Motor/Sensory Impairment

Dementia Diagnosis Characteristics

Frontotemporal Dementia (Pick's Disease)

- Apathy or Disinhibition
- Language and speech deficits
- Memory loss is less pronounced but present

Dementia Diagnosis Characteristics

Lewy Body Disease

- Hallucinations with agitation
- Motor Impairment
 - Stiffness
 - Tremors
- Memory loss is less pronounced but present

Dementia Diagnosis Characteristics

Dementia with Parkinson's

- **Motor Impairment**
 - Stiffness
 - Balance - falls
- **Hallucinations**
- **Agitation**
- **Memory loss**

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Discussion/Questions

Dementia: What to do to Intervene

Environment

Activity

Medications

Dementia: What to do to Intervene

Environment

- Routine
- Low Stimulation

Activity

Medications

Dementia: What to do to Intervene

Environment

Activity

- Physical
- Mental

Medications

Dementia: What to do to Intervene

Medications

- **Slow progression – modestly**
 - Cholinesterase Inhibitors
 - Aricept (donepezil)
 - Exelon (rivastigmine)
 - Razadyne (galantamine)
 - Namenda (memantine)
- **Side effects**
 - GI
 - Cardiovascular

Dementia: What to do to Intervene

Medications

- FDA approved
 - Cholinesterase Inhibitors
 - Alzheimer's Disease
 - Parkinson's Disease (Exelon only)
 - Namenda (memantine)
 - Alzheimer's Disease (moderate-severe)
 - Implications for Medicare Part D plans

Dementia: What to do to Intervene

Medications

- Evidence based
 - Small studies
 - Cholinesterase Inhibitors
 - Lewy Body Disease
 - Mild cognitive impairment
 - Namenda (memantine) – for behavior disturbances

Dementia: What's Up?

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Dementia: Special Problems

Problem Behaviors

Depression

Driving

Dementia: Special Problems

Problem Behaviors - General Approach

- Need driven – seek root cause
- Avoid trying to rationalize/convince
- Avoid saying – “don’t you remember”
- Try distraction
- Avoid fatigue/new situations
- Try intervening with emotion vs rational

Dementia: Special Problems

Problem Behaviors

- Wandering
- “Go home” – packing up
- Repetition
- Apathy
- Sleep/wake cycle disruption

Dementia: Special Problems

Problem Behaviors - Interventions

- Behavioral
 - Routine
 - Low Stimulation
 - Seek root cause
 - Regular daily activities
 - Start, don't invite
 - Avoid escalation

Dementia: Special Problems

Problem Behaviors - Interventions

- Medications
 - Last resort
 - In combination with behavior interventions
- Mood stabilizers
 - Depakote (valproic acid)
- Anti-psychotics
 - Traditional vs atypical
 - Black Box warning
- Benzodizepines
 - Not recommended
 - Widely used

Dementia: Special Problems

Depression

Typical Warning Signs of Depression

Sadness

Fatigue

Abandoning or losing interest in hobbies or other pleasurable pastimes

Social withdrawal and isolation (reluctance to be with friends, engage in activities, or leave home)

Weight loss; loss of appetite

Sleep disturbances (difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep, oversleeping, or daytime sleepiness)

Loss of self-worth (worries about being a burden, feelings of worthlessness, self-loathing)

Increased use of alcohol or other drugs

Fixation on death; suicidal thoughts or attempts

Depression in Older Adults:

Older adults often times deny feeling sad or depressed

Here are the clues to look for:

- Unexplained or aggravated aches and pains
- Hopelessness
- Helplessness
- Anxiety and worries
- Memory problems
- Loss of feeling of pleasure
- Slowed movement
- Irritability
- Lack of interest in personal care (skipping meals, forgetting medications, neglecting personal hygiene)

Suspect Depression?

Steps to take:

- Seek an evaluation
 - Primary Care Physician
 - Geriatrician
 - Psychiatrist
- Seek Treatment
 - Medications
 - Counseling
 - Very treatable disease and can complicate dementia

Dementia: Special Problems

Driving

Special issue: older drivers

STATUS REPORT

Vol. 36, No. 8, September 8, 2001

Older drivers up close

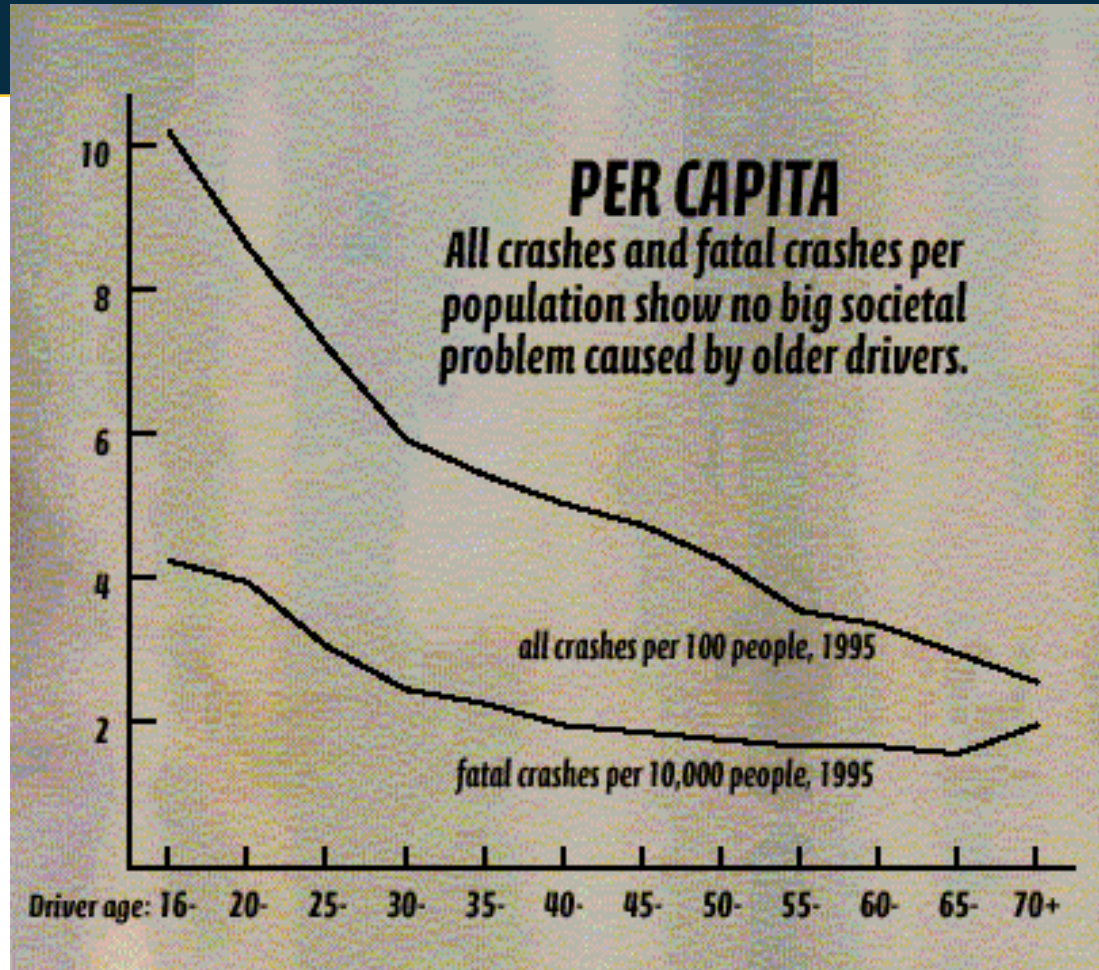
they aren't dangerous except maybe to themselves

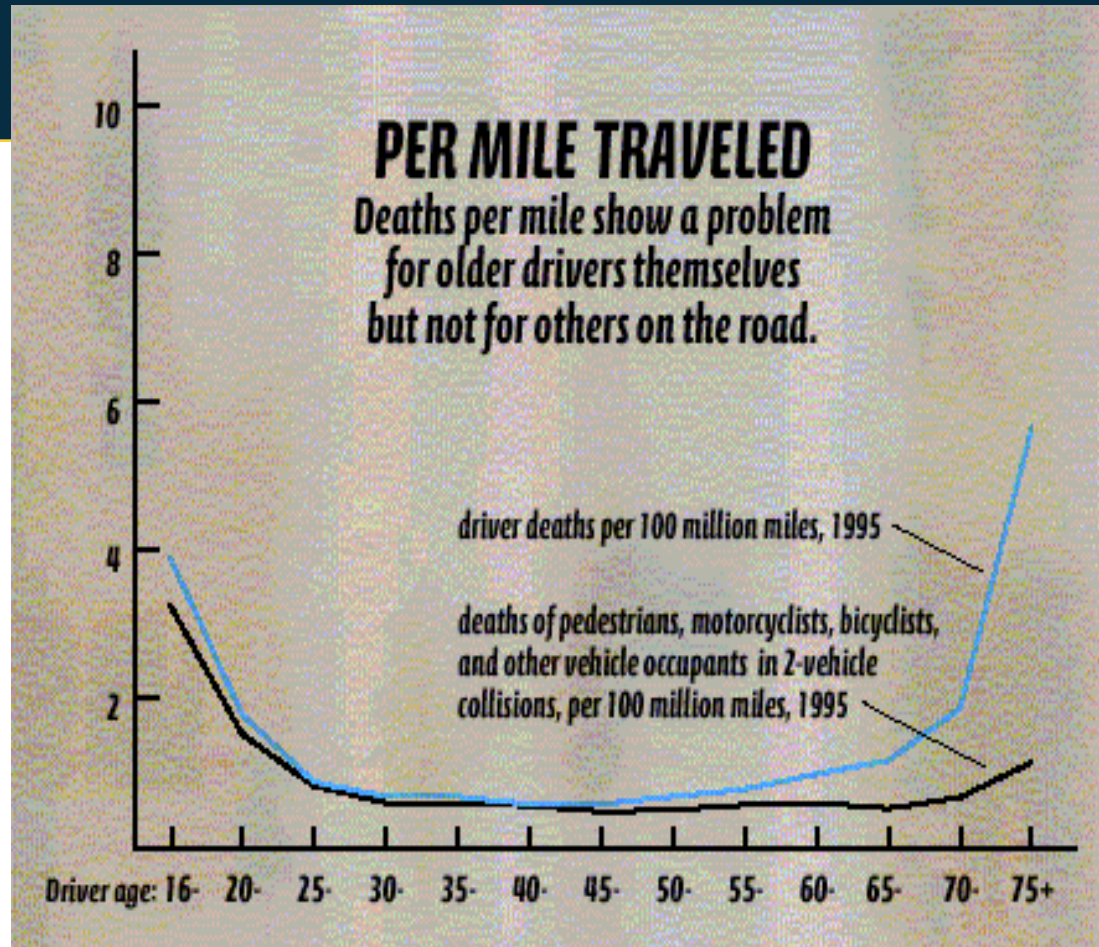
Ann Landers says "the mail keeps pouring in" on older drivers. Relating horror stories about crashes involving seniors at the wheel, she says she's "outraged" about these "semi-expected" drivers. She's not alone, but is her concern warranted? By many measures, no. The nation's seniors don't drive much, compared with younger people, and they pose little threat to others on the road. But a problem does exist for the older drivers themselves. They injure more easily than younger people. They're more likely to die when they get injured. The result is that seniors have higher death rates per mile driven. As the population ages and old or people drive more, they'll represent a bigger proportion of the total highway safety problem.

"To get a full picture of what's happening, you have to look at their crash experience from different perspectives," says Institute chief scientist Allen Williams. "Whether seniors have an excess or not depends on how you measure it."

Seniors have very low crash rates per capita, especially compared with teenagers. One reason is that many older people don't drive, and







Warning Signs of Trouble Driving

- More frequent "close calls" (i.e., almost crashing), or dents and scrapes on the car or on fences, mailboxes, garage doors, curbs
- Failing to use the turn signal, or keeping the signal on without changing lanes
- Drifting into other lanes
- Range-of-motion issues (in looking over the shoulder, moving the hands or feet, etc.)
- Trouble moving the foot from the gas to the brake pedal, or confusing the two pedals
- Oblivious to the frustration of other drivers, not understanding why they are honking
- Reluctance from friends or relatives to be in the car with the senior driving
- Trouble paying attention to signals, road signs, pavement markings, or pedestrians
- Slow reaction to changes in the driving environment

Driving

If you are concerned about the safety of a senior driver

Closely monitor driving to decide whether

1. Brush up on their driving skills
2. OR give up their driver's license altogether

Watch for changes in driving habits, general behavior, and health.

Encourage a **driving evaluation** through the Department of Motor Vehicles

Encourage **refresher driving lessons**

- [AARP Driver Safety course.](#)

Driving

Offer the senior some **self-evaluation tools** to assess driving risk, or work together on these quizzes.

- [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#)
- [University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute](#).

Explore ways to **reduce driving**

Garner support from the older adult's primary care physician and other family members.

- Driving Prescription

Research and propose **alternative modes of transportation**

- [Senior Driving: Transportation Alternatives and Tips for Safe Driving](#)

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Q&A

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