

Older people and driving



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There are many social implications of older people driving, and even not driving. Older people do cause loads of accidents, however all age groups do, so you can not count this as an implication. However older people tend to drive slower and this sometimes causes other drivers on the road to become annoyed with them, causing road rage to grow. However, if old people are stopped from driving, they will lose their independence, this may cause them to stay indoors, all alone, and become ill from depression.

It may also force them to use public transport, which in many countries like the USA is unavailable, and in countries where it is available it isn't the best as many of the occupants' tend to be secondary school kids. Some who are rough, this endangers elderly people's safety. [8] However many people would argue that elderly people should be allowed to drive. This is because of many reasons. Firstly, old people have actually got into fewer accidents than 17-24 year olds. According to the DFT, 27.8% of accidents were caused by drivers in the age of 17-24. Whereas only 7. % of accidents were caused by drivers 70 and over [8]. This source is very reliable because it comes from a governmental company, however there maybe some hints of bias in this source as there are many old people in the company. Old people are also trying to do their best to keep the ability to drive. Mandatory driving tests are being taken in California. It requires anyone retesting if they are involved in a fatal car crash or three or more crashes in one year. If drivers are 70 or older and are involved in two or more car crash they are required to retest.

However, this system is only in place in California, but there have been proposals in sever other American states to toughen licensing requirements for elder people, but these proposals have been thwarted by groups who

represent elderly people. They believe that it is discrimination to take age-based measures on licensing requirements. In Pennsylvania physicians are required to report any disabilities that may affect a driver's ability, however doctors are hesitant to do this as it may endanger their relationship with the patients [1].

All of these measures are being taken out by the government, but the elderly drivers themselves are also taking actions. They realise that they are incapable of driving as well as they could when they were young. Some decide to drive in daylight, so their eyesight is not exposed as badly, and they drive on quieter roads which avoids risk of accident. [6] There are also countless environmental implications as well. If old people don't drive then the petrol and car prices would rise. This is because there will be less buyers of cars, and petrol.

It may not affect cars as much as old people tend to buy cheaper ones, but they still need petrol. If they aren't buying petrol then the companies will increase the prices. However if old people do drive then the government will have to pay for many things. They will have to pay to assess damage of accidents, and they will also have to provide regular check-ups and retests, which is also a waste of money [8]. There are also many economical insinuations of older people driving. Less carbon emissions will be released into the atmosphere if elderly people cannot drive.

This is because fewer cars are on the road. Also, there will be no need to disabled spaces, as elderly people won't be driving. This will mean that there will be more space for other drivers. Also, there will be fewer cars on the

road as elderly people will need to car pool or use public transport. [8] After looking over my research in more detail I believe that old people should be allowed to drive. They have the same right as any other citizen, maybe even more as they have been around longer. They deserve their independence and one of the main ways for them to be independent is by driving.

However I do believe that old people can be very liable and that's why the government should take regular health checkups and retests. After looking through my sources, I believe that source 1 and 3 were the most useful and reliable. This is because they provided me with a lot of information, and were from reliable places, such as smart motorist. Even though some of these facts were outdated, they were still very useful for me. However all of the sources were very useful. I believe that source 2 and 8 were the least useful, this is because they come from unknown places.

Source 8 was from a science teacher, and the information was unreliable because it may have been misinterpreted by me. Some people believe that elderly people should not be able to drive. This is because of a number of reasons. Older drivers tend to have slower reaction times and poorer eyesight than younger, more physically able people. A survey taken in 1999 by FARS reports that senior citizens or old people are accounted for more than 15% of pedestrian fatalities, they were also accounted for more than 10% of traffic and vehicle occupant fatalities.

This is contrasted to younger people who are the cause of 28% of deaths but are only 14% of the American population. [2] Source 1 is more reliable than source 2 because it comes from smart motorist, and specialist company

who dedicate their lives to car's and motoring facts, whereas source 2 is a reliable source, this particular survey concentrates on teenage drivers who are under the influence of alcohol, and this is unreliable because not all teenagers drink.

Older people also have a tendency to be involved in car crashes more often. A survey taken in 1997 by NHTSA shows the 82% of crashes involving older people took place in the daytime, and when a crash involved a older driver and younger driver the older driver was 3 times more likely to have been struck by the other car [1]. This source is unreliable because the facts presented are taken from a survey taken twelve years ago, and the rate of these facts may have decreased or even increased.

Another major cause for concern of old people not being able to drive is their visual aging. When humans reach 60 years old their lens becomes yellower, this makes it more difficult to notice neutral colours such as blue. The lens also becomes more opaque, which prevents less light to reach the retina. Also the diameter of the pupil shrinks, and this also cause less light to reach the retina. Due to all of these changes at the age of 60, only 33% less light reaches the retina, this is compared to age 20.

Moreover in the late seventies the and of light that reaches the retina fall to 12% [4]. This source was very reliable as it comes from a well know eye company specialists. Furthermore drivers over the age of eighty-five are nine times more likely to cause fatal car crashes than 25-69 year olds [7]. This source is also very reliable because it comes from smart motorist, a well know motorist specialist.