Driving licences and medical screening in old age: Review of literature and European licensing policies

Chronological age, per se, seems to be, in the case of mature drivers, only a weak predictor of safe driving performance. However, screening policies based on chronological age are widely used. Nevertheless, lately, more evidence-based policies have been called for. In this paper we first, investigate the evidence for and against having an age-based driver screening policy in place; second, we map and compare the current driving licensing policies in European Union (EU) member states in order to examine the variation; and third, we draw conclusions based on the literature and the policy mapping and provide policy recommendations. We find no evidence from the literature demonstrating that the benefits from age-based driver screening would outweigh the disadvantages, and we find the European policies, to a large extent, coercive and not evidence-based. Based on research evidence, the policies are likely to limit the mobility and potentially worsen the safety of older persons.

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