How is the older road users’ perception of risk constructed?

As the driver population is ageing rapidly in industrialized countries, questions about older drivers’ risk perception, self-awareness and judgement have gained a lot of interest. Older drivers have generally been thought to have more realistic risk perception, which in turn is reflected in their driving behaviour, but there is no unequivocal proof for this in the research literature. The present study aims to help to understand the risk perception of this group by studying how older persons construct their perceptions about risk and safety. The study uses material from focus groups conducted with Danish senior citizens. The material is analysed with qualitative methods. The findings of the study indicate that older persons in this study tended to perceive risk as something external (e.g., bad infrastructure) that can sometimes be managed by internal means (e.g., skills). The results also indicate that while the risk perception and driving behaviour of older persons are connected, the connection is perhaps different from what has previously been suggested. The findings of the present study suggest that older drivers might self-regulate their driving, not as a result of perceiving themselves to have limitations but by perceiving other road users behaving dangerously. While the self-regulation practices adapted by the participants may have been responses to age-related changes, they were constructed as practices based on the driver’s skills, experience and preferences, and presented as responses to external factors. The present study offers a better understanding of the way older drivers perceive traffic risks and gives methodological openings for studying the risk perception and mobility choices of older people.

General information
Publication status: Published
Organisations: Traffic Safety, Department of Transport, Danish Road Directorate
Contributors: Siren, A. K., Kjær, M. R.
Pages: 222-228
Publication date: 2011
Peer-reviewed: Yes

Publication information
Journal: Transportation Research Part F: Psychology and Behaviour
Volume: 14
Issue number: 3
ISSN (Print): 1369-8478
Ratings:
BFI (2011): BFI-level 2
Scopus rating (2011): CiteScore 2.56 SJR 1.301 SNIP 2.187
Web of Science (2011): Impact factor 1.989
ISI indexed (2011): ISI indexed yes
Web of Science (2011): Indexed yes
Original language: English
Keywords: Subjective risk, Older drivers, Risk perception
DOIs: 10.1016/j.trf.2011.01.002
Source: orbit
Source-ID: 275803
Research output: Contribution to journal › Journal article – Annual report year: 2011 › Research › peer-review