Managing the safe mobility of older road users: How to cope with their diversity?

Against the background of an ageing population, the management of older people’s safe mobility is becoming an increasingly important issue. Mobility is vital for older people’s quality of life and several examples of good practice that support older people’s safe mobility already exist. However, the older population is increasingly diverse and its different segments have different mobility needs and expectations. This paper has reviewed practices to manage older people’s safe mobility and identified 29 examples of good practice which fall into six categories. The different kinds of practices were assessed with regard to their suitability for different segments of the older population as identified in previous studies. In addition, we considered whether the needs of certain segments remain unmet. Our study found that most practices target individuals with mobility restrictions and mainly attract groups who are already users and improve their (safe) use of the preferred transport mode. However, they do not seem to succeed in increasing mobility options, e.g. by encouraging car-reliant users to cycle or use public transport or by helping older women to continue to drive. We advise that existing practices should more directly target those segments that would benefit from them the most and be adapted more specifically to these segments’ needs and preferences. We have identified a complete failure to provide awareness programs to inform older users about the potential benefits of driver assistance systems, a lack of programmes to increase perceived security, as well as a comprehensive scheme for older drivers who have to stop driving.

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