

ABSTRACT

Driving safety in drivers with cognitive changes is a major concern. Occupational therapists are expected to address these concerns because of their clinical training.

Are occupational therapists nationally fulfilling their role of problem identification/screening/assessing/referring drivers with potential cognitive impairment? According to the “Knowledge to Action” model (Graham et al, 2006) understanding current practices and gaps in best practice are a necessary part of increasing the use of best practices.

Thus, the primary objective of this study (Phase 2 of a 3 phase Knowledge Translation (KT) initiative) is to conduct a Canada-wide survey that:

describes problem identification, screening, assessment and referral practices of Canadian occupational therapists specific to older drivers with a range of cognitive impairments from mild cognitive impairment (MCI) to Alzheimer’s Disease.

This study will involve an internet-administered survey of a random sample of OTs in Canada that treat community-dwelling older individuals. Prompted by 3 case vignettes (previously created for a physician survey) representing older individuals - one with cues suggesting mild cognitive impairment, the others moderate to severe dementia - clinicians will describe the assessments and referrals specific to driving concerns they would use in “usual practice”. The information gleaned will be used to inform key stakeholders on the current practices and the continuing education needs of therapists specific to driver screening, assessment and referral. The findings will also inform Phase 3 where a KT intervention will be created, initiated, and subsequently tested for its effectiveness using a follow-up survey, to identify change in practices based on the tailored KT intervention we implement and test for effectiveness. Phase 3 will meet the 2011 requirements of funding as stated in the Strauss Proposal Guidelines. “*All projects must evaluate the impact of their knowledge translation plan by measuring change in clinicians’ practice behaviours, patient-related outcomes, and/or organizational characteristics (as applicable) at the end of their study*”. As we at McGill’s School of Physical and Occupational Therapy offer a graduate level Driving Certificate Program, this study will have direct impact by providing evidence of knowledge gaps experienced by our key stakeholders - occupational therapists and their clients.

Driving-related screening, assessment, and referral practices of Occupational Therapists (OT) treating older individuals experiencing mild cognitive impairment and dementia -

Phase 2 of a 3 phase Knowledge Translation Strategy aimed at improving OT practices