Occupational Therapy’s Role In Decisions About Driving Evaluation And Community Mobility

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Occupational Therapy & Driving

- Occupational therapy: “Addressing engagement in occupation to support participation”

- IADLs are defined as “activities that are oriented toward interacting with the environment and that are often complex.”

  (AOTA Practice Framework, 2002)
AD Symptoms Impacting Driving

- Degenerative disease
- Progressing memory loss
- Increasing inability to perform well learned tasks
- Decrease in judgment
- Impaired reasoning
- Inattention and disorientation
- Restlessness
- Anxiety

(Hunt, L., Morris, J et al. 1993)
Occupational Therapy’s Role

- Prevention & Wellness
- Education
  - Self-awareness and risk
  - Medical conditions and driving
- Evaluation
  - Clinical
  - On road (requires professionals with specialized training)
- Individualized education (post screen or evaluation)
- Strategies for cessation & compliance
  - Client
  - Family
- Selection of alternative mobility
  - “dementia friendly”
RISK

When a person with impaired ability to drive drives

Impaired cessation:

- non-compliance – drives anyway
- Lack of understanding – believes they can
- Forgets – without family / caregiver intervention the recommendation is not recalled

- Considering the impairments associated with dementia … The role of family / caregiver in the process of cessation is critical
Prevention, Education, Choices and Self-limiting Behavior

- OT Program in North Carolina working with
  - Continuing Care Retirement Communities
  - Partner with AARP, AAA, Area Agencies on Aging, and Medical Review Board of the DMV

- Screening of risk factors
  - Goal: education
  - May refer for a comprehensive driving evaluation

- Address community mobility alternatives – early!
  - Choice
  - Options
Determining FITNESS TO DRIVE

- Evaluation “The Driving Evaluation”
  - What to evaluate?
  - When to evaluate?
- Driving evaluation requires
  - Clinical plus on-road
    - Exception: medical conditions
  - Specialized education
- Outcome of evaluation
  - No impairment
  - Impairment – “remediate the deficit”
    - offer Training
    - Referral (specialists for vision, depression, flexibility or range of motion)
  - Impairment-
    - Adaptation, compensation
    - recommend restriction
- Cessation
  - Transitioning
  - Appropriate alternatives
On Road Evaluation

- Functional performance in context
  - “neighborhood” and familiar routes
- Early MCI or Mild dementia
  - For those that demonstrate ability to learn
  - Strategies and compensation
- Impaired driving ability
  - Challenge problem solving and judgment
  - Opportunity for family observation and buy-in
- Family opportunity to “observe”
Determining FITNESS TO DRIVE

- Timing…at what point in the progression?
  - Predicting the course of the disease
  - Impact of medications (retard decline)
- Psycho-social
  - Personality style
  - Capacity for insight, self awareness and self regulation
Driving Cessation in Older Adults with Dementia of the Alzheimer's Type (Carr 2005)

- Looked at the process of cessation by older adults with dementia (archival database Wash U AD Research Center)
  - Timing
  - Reasons
  - Methods
- Surprised to find no differences in the psychometric profiles
- Many stopped driving at mild level ... might they have ceased driving prematurely?
Possible contributors to cessation

- Psychosocial factors may play a more important role
- Medical illness
- Most stopped at the request of family but frequently the physician and client were involved
- Need for planning for alternatives

Carr 2005
Cessation

- Role of family
  - Importance of understanding, “buy-in”

- Cessation strategies
  - Environmental
  - Contextual
  - Physical

- “How to keep loved one from driving is not intuitive”
  - Protect vs. restrict
Resources (handouts) available at www.aota.org/olderdriver

- AOTA Driving Statement
- AOTA Older Driver Fact sheet www.aota.org/olderdriver
- OT Practice articles (both posted on the Microsite at www.aota.org/olderdriver)
  - Starting Down the Road to Establishing driver Evaluation Program by Susan Pierce
  - Screening Driving and Community Mobility Status by Joe Pellerito and Elin Schold Davis
References


References


References