

## Referrals to Occupational Therapy Driving Assessors: A Qualitative Study of General Practitioners

**Authors :** Mary Butler

**Abstract :** Background: Screening programmes for older drivers in Europe (though not the UK), and in many states in the US and in Australia are based on medical assessment of fitness to drive. These programmes require physicians (including general practitioners) to carry out an assessment of fitness to drive in their offices. In 2006, New Zealand changed from doing on-road driving tests with all older drivers from the age of 80, to a screening programme that uses medical assessment of fitness to drive only. Aim: This study set out to understand the experience of New Zealand GPs as they manage the process of medical assessment of fitness to drive assessments for older people. In particular, it aimed to establish how GPs understand the role of specialist driving assessment and rehabilitation carried out by occupational therapists. Design and setting: The study used an interpretive descriptive approach to analyze data from ten interviews with GPs in New Zealand. Results: The results indicated that GPs lack understanding about how occupational therapists can assist their patients, and tend to refer only when there is a disagreement with the patient. Conclusion: There are problems with the medical assessment of fitness to drive carried out by GPs, and there is a need for a more comprehensive community approach to driving cessation. Patients, families and the multidisciplinary team all have a role in deciding when driving cessation should occur. Occupational therapists have a particular responsibility for strategic leadership in this area of practice.

**Keywords :** assessment, driving, older people, occupational therapy

**Conference Title :** ICOT 2019 : International Conference on Occupational Therapy

**Conference Location :** Paris, France

**Conference Dates :** March 28-29, 2019