

# Study investigates age-related vision loss and driving performance

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Older drivers with age-related vision loss are the focus of a new QUT study.

Older drivers with age-related vision loss will be the focus of a new QUT study designed to test their on-the-road performance.

Professor Joanne Wood from QUT's School of Optometry and Vision Science is an expert in the impact of ocular disease, vision and driving.

Professor Wood said age-related macular degeneration (AMD) was the leading cause of blindness and loss of vision in Australia.

"The results from this study will indicate the nature of the driving difficulties experienced by participants in the group and assist in the design of possible interventions," Dr Wood said.

She said major advances in treatment of AMD helped prevent further deterioration as long as possible.

"While the treatment doesn't cure the condition it has allowed people to continue to perform every-day activities such as driving," Professor Wood said.

"Driving allows people to maintain their independence for longer and has been shown to have a positive effect on quality of life."

Professor Wood said one in seven Australians over 50 years of age have some evidence of age-related [macular degeneration](#).

She said data on older adults with [age-related macular degeneration](#) and their experiences of driving difficulties had been recorded but a test of their actual driving ability hadn't.

"Our goal is to maintain the safe driving ability for people with these eye conditions for as long as possible," Professor Wood said.

"This could be achieved through education and training interventions."

Professor Wood said possible interventions such as driver training, including training of scanning strategies as well as education are likely to assist in maintaining and improving driver safety.

Participants would be involved in two testing sessions, involving a series of [vision](#), memory and awareness tests.

The second session would be a 45-minute driving research assessment with a qualified [driving](#) instructor which would have no effect on a participant's driver's licence.

Provided by Queensland University of Technology

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