

Research looks at how ageing affects driving

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Researchers at The Australian National University (ANU) are studying how ageing affects driving with the aim of promoting road safety, and they are looking for more older drivers to help with the project.

Professor Kaarin Anstey, director of the Centre for Research on Ageing said there is a lot of variation in the way ageing affects driving functions and it is possible for one person in their 60 to be less safe on the road

than another who is in their 70s.

Professor Anstey said the critical functions associated with [driver safety](#) in [older people](#) include the ability to detect motion, the ability to maintain balance and the ability to respond to events quickly.

"This variation means that accurate screening of such skills is necessary to assess risk in a senior driver," Professor Anstey said.

"We are working out ways of assessing driving skills and safety, and developing interventions to improve skills. There are some adults at all ages who for health reasons cannot drive safely."

The researchers are looking for people aged 65 or older who live in the ACT or surrounding regions of New South Wales to enrol in the study.

"We already have over 270 wonderful participants for our study - we can't do this important research without their help," Professor Anstey said.

Volunteers engage in a range of screening activities, including eye tests, memory and reaction time measurements. They then take part in a drive with a registered occupational therapist and driving instructor.

The researchers keep in touch with the volunteers for one to two years to look at how [driving](#) patterns change over time.

Many volunteers say they have valued the feedback they have received from the study.

The data collected is for research only and cannot impact on anyone's driver's licence.

More information: Anyone interested in taking part should call the Driver, Ageing, Safety and Health research team at ANU on 6125 1457.

Provided by Australian National University

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