

'Driving straight' may be suitable road test in dementia

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(HealthDay)—Drivers with dementia who have more difficulties driving straight and making left and right turns are more likely to fail road testing, according to a study published in the July issue of the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*.

Peggy P. Barco, O.T.D., from the Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, and colleagues conducted a cross-sectional study involving 60 active drivers diagnosed with dementia and 32 older adult controls. All drivers underwent a standardized clinical and on-road driving assessment.

The researchers found that 62 and 3 percent, respectively, of those with

dementia and controls failed the road test. Individuals with dementia made twice as many driving errors as controls, based on the Record of Driving Errors (RODE) tool. Individuals within the dementia sample who failed the road test had more difficulties driving straight and making left and right turns than during lane changes. Dangerous actions occurred most frequently during driving straight and the execution of left turns. In the dementia sample, specific driving behaviors associated with road test failure included difficulties in lane positioning and usage, appropriate stopping of the vehicle, attention, decision-making, and following road rules. More impairment with cognitive functioning on the Assessing Dementia 8 Screening Interview was reported by informants of participants with dementia who failed the [road test](#).

"Driving on straight roads has not been considered a condition of 'high challenge' in prior driving studies in individuals with dementia," the authors write. "This finding has potential implications for future interventions related to vehicle instrumentation and driving recommendations for people with [dementia](#)."

One author disclosed financial ties to the pharmaceutical industry.

More information: [Abstract](#)
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