

Older adult drivers found to have a lower risk of causing motor vehicle crashes than younger drivers

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Drawing on data on motor vehicle crashes in Japan between 2016 and 2020, researchers at the University of Tsukuba examined the risk of at-fault motor vehicle crashes among older adult drivers. They found that the risk of causing crashes increased with the advancing age of drivers

after middle age, but the risk among older drivers was nevertheless lower than that among young drivers.

Older adult drivers are required to take driving lessons and undergo cognitive screening tests when renewing their driving licenses, and they are increasingly encouraged to surrender their licenses as they age. Although ceasing to drive eliminates the risk of causing motor vehicle crashes, it also restricts mobility, which can interfere with the daily life of older adults and impair their health. Measures for [older drivers](#) must consider the risk of causing crashes and the risk of impaired health.

To examine the risk of older adult drivers causing [motor vehicle crashes](#), [this study](#) used data on crashes in Japan between 2016 and 2020 and compared the number of at-fault crashes per licensed driver (crash risk), number of injuries per crash (injury risk), and rate of fatal crashes by sex and age group of the at-fault driver. The findings have been published in *Journal of Epidemiology*

Crash risk was found to increase with advancing driver age after middle age; however, this risk was lower for older adult drivers than for [young drivers](#), and the injury risk for those who were hit did not differ based on the age group of at-fault drivers. In [fatal crashes](#), the older the driver, the higher the chance that the driver was killed in a single crash; pedestrians or bicyclists were killed with this group less often.

This study suggests that although older adult drivers can be victims of [crashes](#) that they have caused, their crash risk remains lower than that of young drivers, and the risk of death or injury to those who are hit does not differ by age group. In addition to efforts made to reduce crash risk among older adult drivers, support is needed to enable these drivers to continue driving safely and to live active lives after they stop driving.

More information: Masao Ichikawa et al, Revisiting older drivers'

risks of at-fault motor vehicle collisions in Japan, *Journal of Epidemiology* (2023). [DOI: 10.2188/jea.JE20230217](https://doi.org/10.2188/jea.JE20230217)

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