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Health News

Elderly drivers more careful

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GRANADA, Spain, Feb. 24 (UPI) -- One-quarter of those age 74 and older in Spain drive, but although their accident rate is lower, if they crash, it is more serious, Spanish researchers say.

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David Canton Cortes, Mercedes Duran Segura and Candida Castro Ramirez, all professors at the University of Granada in Spain, say in recent decades a significant increase in crash rates for drivers age 60 and older has been reported.

However, contrary to conventional wisdom, the researchers find the crash rates for this age group are lower than that for drivers age 20 and younger.

"Age does not seem to be a contributing factor in fatal accidents," Canton concludes.

The researchers find that although elderly drivers have deteriorated driving abilities, they are more cautious to compensate for their deficiencies. As a result, older drivers avoid engaging in risky behaviors like speeding, passing dangerously or driving under the effects of alcohol.

"The authorities should allow elderly drivers to keep driving as long as they can, providing that this does not involve any risk for their own safety and that of others," the study authors say in a statement.

The findings are published in Revista Espanola de Geriatria y Gerontologia.

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