04   **CHARACTERISTICS OF DRIVERS REFERRED BY POLICE TO VICROADS: EVIDENCE FOR INDICATORS OF DECLINING DRIVING COMPETENCE**

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Background Cognitive and physical impairments associated with health conditions and ageing may impact on driving capacity. With no age-based mandatory assessment, VicRoads relies on self and community referrals to initiate the process of identifying and managing potentially at-risk drivers. The majority of drivers reported to VicRoads are referred by police. As there is no published research which describes police referred drivers, this is an important study.

Aims Researchers sought to understand police referral information and the characteristics and medical review outcomes for a sample of drivers.

Methods A retrospective data mining methodology was applied to a sample of active de-identified driver files. Data were analysed using descriptive and χ^2 analyses.

Results Driver files (n=131) were reviewed and police referrals (n=141) were examined (some files had >1 referral). Average driver age was 76 years and 92% had at least one medical diagnosis. The majority of referrals (n=133) described an instigating event for example, poor driving (80%) and/or a crash (68%), with most occurring at intersections (37%) or in car parks (20%). Events were commonly associated with inappropriate/dangerous driving (62%) or failing to obey road laws (47%). The review process resulted in licence cancellation/suspension for 46% of drivers: licence withdrawal was associated with increasing age, certain medical conditions, poor driving and inappropriate driver behaviour.

Significance Police play an important role in DLA medical review systems: results highlight (a) what triggers a review request and driver characteristics, and (b) the need to educate police and the community about indicators of declining driving competency.