



University of Nevada, Reno  
Statewide • Worldwide

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## **Driving & Dementia Survey: Persons with Cognitive Impairment & Family Caregivers**

Prepared for Nevada Task Force on Alzheimer's Disease - Driving Subcommittee  
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Data from 143 participants (not all surveys contained responses to every question)

- 123 family caregivers
- 20 persons with cognitive impairment
- 46 males
- 91 females
- Range in age from 24-91

Data from 8 counties and 1 independent city (number of surveys in parentheses):

- Carson City (independent city) (4)
- Churchill (4)
- Clark (19)
- Douglas (2)
- Elko (34)
- Humboldt (23)
- Lyon (4)
- Pershing (32)
- Washoe (19)

Diagnosis (self or family member):

- Didn't answer (29%)
- Alzheimer's disease (25%)
- Vascular dementia (21%)
- Unspecified dementia (11%)
- Suspected cognitive impairment (11%)
- Other diagnosis (3%)
- Parkinson's disease (1%)

Relationship to person with dementia:

- Spouse (30%)

- Adult child (43%)
- Small percentages for aunt/uncle, grandparent, sibling, child, and other

**1) Do you have concerns about your driving safety (or the driving safety of your family member)? 39% yes**

Specific concerns:

ability to navigate the road, see process traffic and response time
accidents involving others
Anticipate future action
Bad weather driving and driving @ night
confusion - gas and brake pedal
Danger to self and others, getting lost, etc.
Do not like to drive at night or in heavy traffic. More difficult to check traffic from sight. SO avoid these situations.
doesn't pay attention- very aggressive toward other vehicles & pedestrians
Even though no accidents so far, when do I draw the line & take the car away?
Eye problems - I only drive in lovelock or try not to drive at night
forget my destination or how to get to another place other than home
gave up driving 4 yrs ago
getting lost
Getting lost while driving
getting lost while driving, lack of concentration on the road
going on wrong lane
had a concern; she is deceased
he has been lost in the car. He has fallen asleep at stop lighs and had an accident of running into a curb which flattened the tire. He drove home with the flat tire and shredded it. He had a speeding ticket going over 100 miles an hour. I made him stop driving.
his drivers license has been revoked 2 years
hurting self or others
I don't drive

I don't drive no moor (last 4 yeaehes)
I don't drive on the interstate anymore because my stroke has left me veering into the left lane
I don't let him drive
I haven't been driving because of injury to my left femur broken = I do have drivers license
I used to have concerns until he had his driver's license taken away. Now he only complains about the lack of freedom, and that he needs family members to drive him. If no one is available to do what he wants, he is very angry.
Is slow with making decisions
license has been revoked
mother surrendered license voluntarily
My eyesight - at night only
my main concern with my grandfather driving is the risk he makes that could injure or kill others
My mother voluntarily gave up driving years before dementia diagnosis.
My spouse hasn't driven since Mother's day weekend (2015).
night driving, bad weather, can get lost
no longer driving. I work w/ geriatrics as social work
none of this applies
None, I live in a small town. None of this applies to me.
Not at this time
not related to my auntie but to my friends, often their family has difficulty making decision & sticking with the decision of not driving. How to have the discussion with them.
police @ house twice for brother's driving
Seems like I am waiting for an accident or him getting lost. How do I determine if he should NOT drive, occasionally speeds.
She gave up her Driver's license on her own
she is unable to judge space and area
slow reactions
Somewhat - my concerns involve his ability to pay enough attention and not get distracted
stopped driven 2 yrs ago
that he will get distracted & forget where he is going
Trouble with eyes, side vision
Visual (eyes) occasional dizziness, "Whay am I going there?"
was concerned with his ability to find his destination and/or his ability to navigate his way around or return home
we have major concerns for our clients when family and/or Dr. will not revoke driving privleges.

weekly fender benders - community enables him by voiding tickets, issuing licenses etc.
What is the right time to have your family member quit driving'
When I drive in Fernley and when Mary goes with me when going to Reno, she is very gentle, her point is so gentle! Love you, Mary

**2) Has a family member intervened to prevent you from driving (or have you intervened to prevent your family member from driving)? 40% yes**

- Took away keys 11%
- Disabled the car 3%
- Took away the car 8%
- Other intervention 18%
  - Specific other interventions:

Asked doctor to tell him he cannot drive
did not renew license because DMV wanted a doctor note
Dr. recommend stop
Dr. required drive test
Drove for them
handed over his keys
I just drive most of the time
I sent letter to DMV to have my dad take written test due to concerns.
just offered to drive
left her car in another state
Medical
my grandma does not drive anymore as family choice - we took away car and sold it.
My son drives for me
Sold the car; wife voluntarily (under protest) gave up driving.
sold the truck
spoke to her dr.
suggested she drive for me

talked to physician regarding her driving
talked to the dr
Told her insurance has exp.
Told her she couldn't drive anymore
told the Dr. and he told my husband
took driver license
was temp. unable to drive as instructed by physician
Went to DMV and had her license suspended. The susequently reissued it.
when I'm around, I drive

**3) Have you (or your family member) stopped driving? 30% yes**

- If yes, did you (or he/she) voluntarily stop driving?
  - 22% yes
- Were your (or his/her) driving privileges revoked?
  - 8% yes

**4) Have you and your family had arguments about your (or his/her) driving ability? 20% yes**

**5) Have you (or your family member) experienced transportation challenges as a result of concerns about driving?**

- Difficulty getting to medical appointments 11% yes
- Difficulty obtaining groceries and other necessities 8% yes
- Difficulty obtaining prescription medications 4% yes
- Difficulty visiting family and friends 7% yes
- Other (please specify) 15% yes

Family drives her. She does walk some places, which has its own issue.
He lives with family so no need to buy groceries, etc. Only have problems when he makes apointments for medical and family members can't take him. Otherwise he uses the senior bus to go anywhere, just not to Reno for medical because they don't go long haul.
I have to drive him everywhere and I work fulltime.
My son drives for me. Shopping and Gambling
she offers to drive
spouse is only driver at 83 yrs old

**6) Were alternative transportation options available? 45% yes**

- Family or friends provided rides 34% yes
- Public transportation (busses, taxi) 8% yes
- Hired caregiver provided transportation 5% yes
- Volunteer service provided transportation 3% yes
- Used delivery services for obtaining needed food, medications, etc. 1% yes
- Other resource (please specify) 12% yes

Carlin Senior Center
CART
Cart
Drive her myself
Friends take him, and the senior bus takes him wherever he wants
Haven't used any
husband drives for me
I (wife) drive
I'm still capable of driving
Paratransit
Senior citizens bus
Senior Center Transportation is available to those in need
Sr. Van
Walk
wheel tras for handicapped

**7) Have you ever discussed concerns about your (or your family member's) driving with a physician or other healthcare provider? 25% yes**

If yes, how helpful was the discussion?

Ambiguous
Dr. helped convince spouse not to drive
Dr. recommended to stop
Dr. not willing to get involved in confrontation - insurance company currently may intervene with current license but no matter - he'll drive regardless of being licensed or insured
Dr. provided healthcare placard. Dr. didn't suggest stop driving.
fairly helpful

good but stressful
Got a letter saying she shouldn't drive. Took to DMV & her license was suspended. DMV later reissued license. Sheesh!!!!
Her doctor gave her a driving test to see if was able to drive - which passed at this time
His doctor said no driving but my spouse doesn't remember and still thinks he can drive
However I know tat the Drs. At HGH are not too happy to make a diagnosis, or tell a patient they cannot or should not drive. They leave it up to the cops.
It depends on the health care provider
It wasn't that the Dr. was not willing to help - he did not want to be responsible for helping take that away
It worked for mother, but have yet to approach dad.
My answers are based on my experience concerning my dad in a different stat. I actually wrote a letter to the DMV, ask they provide my dad with a written test.
No problem - husband was too far gone with Alzheimer's
She had him sign a form saying that when I feel he can no longer drive safely, he will stop driving.
The doctor made it to where my Dad had to pass a driving test, he failed miserably.
They were helpful in explaing why she shouldn't be driving
They're pleased Bard isnt driving, although she has a valid drivers license
Through dr. - yes very helpful
Very
Very
Very good
Very helpful
Very helpful - plus my spouse has not been upset about me doing most of the driving - he drives in daylight hours if I am in the car
Very helpful.
Very helpful. The doctor had my mother-in-law take a medical driving test and evaluation
We have a l.d.s sponsored community transports to appts.

**8) What was the outcome of the discussion with the physician?**

- The physician decided to make a report to the DMV. 3% yes
- The physician instructed or encouraged me (or my family member) to stop driving. 12% yes
- The physician informed me (or my family member) it was safe for me (or them) to continue driving. 6% yes

- Other (please specify) 12% yes

Gave up voluntarily
Good!
I have my own drivers license
I made the decision
IND. Evaluation scheduled at Renown & OT.
Knowing what was wrong
Mother gave up the license and the car
nothing, just info
Ok in daylight if I am in the car with him
sign letter each year
the driving test did the job.
very non-chalant about it

**9) Since you (or your family member) began to show signs of cognitive impairment, have you (or they):**

- Been in a car accident while driving? 7% yes
- Received a citation for a moving violation? 8% yes

**10) Have you (or your family member) participated in any of the following assessments at the DMV?**

- Written driving assessment 2% yes
- Vision assessment 9% yes
- On-road driving assessment 3% yes
- Other assessment (please specify): 8% yes

He has always been released of the responsibilities
Must wear glasses
Pending appt. & OT
pending assessment
Regular license renewal
senior driving class

- If so, was the assessment
  - Required 8%
  - Voluntary 4%



**11) Do you have any suggestions for the State of Nevada for making it easier for persons with dementia and their families to deal with the issue of driving safety?**

"I wish I did, but no."
"More press & more dialogue"
After 75 or 80 yrs there should be a more comprehensive test for driving.
allow people to call DMV with the names of family members who have dementia with the end result of having them tested or have their license revoked.
continue to have handicap buses
healthcare access improvement -VA better provider cooperation
I do not know when he should have a driving assessment. I think it would be helpful if they had mandatory assessments every 6 months once they receive a diagnosis of Alzheimer's.
If elderly w/ dementia is in auto accident. Should have investigation so family not have to fight with them to give up license
Many people in the rural areas think it's ok to drive "at home" which means in the small town they live in, Battle Mountain, Winnemucca, etc. but then cannot go to urban areas for medical treatment. Greyhound bus or train are the only options besides having family/friends drive to appointments for real medical care. It would be helpful to have a more affordable and more available public transport system, from rural areas to Reno/Wendover or Salt Lake. People would use this even if they don't have dementia. It is hard to get older people with a diagnosis, or just poor reflexes to give up driving because they see it as house arrest. There are often no public transport options available to get to a shopping center, visit friends, or go where you want. Please be sure you fund public transport like the senior bus in rural areas.
on her own/memory & where traveling getting lost
provide low cost "UBER" type transportation
Report people whom you believe are of concern. Awareness!! Other people are at risk when people drive that shouldn't
required yearly assessment for seniors. Required assessments after questionable accidents or citations.
Suggest caregivers consult with senior advocates
take driving away. Has to be difficult but saving lives, yours & others
We need laws requiring more frequent testing including road tests on older drivers (70 OR 75+) and possible mental tests. DMV needs a flag on a person's records when their license has been suspended by a doctor's letter (and their children) so a license isn't easily reinstated.
When it comes to Alzheimer people that should be dealt with a one on one case as driving goes. In regards to when its comes to keep driving.

Work with the doctors treating persons with dementia and the medical driving test. We need more information perhaps in the phone book as to options to call for assistance

Yes. Revamp the entire system cause testing every time a license is renewed