Driving ability is a frequent concern for elderly patients and their family. Unfortunately, there is no easy answer to if or when an older person should quit driving, very scarce research and few validated tools to assess driving ability.

Several changes frequently seen with aging can interfere with driving ability. These include slower response time, decreased vision and hearing, decreased muscle strength and flexibility, reduced concentration and increased adverse effects (mainly sedation) from medications.

Evaluation of driving ability is best done with a road test. Some assessment tools have been studied and validated. Among those, the DriveSafe and DriveAware assessment tools have been shown to predict driving-related function and self-restriction of driving.

Medication with activity on central nervous system activity can further impair driving ability. While it is important to warn patients of possible effects of these medications on their driving, one should be cautious not to unnecessarily restrict older persons driving, because it is an important way to preserve one’s autonomy.