Author’s response to reviews

Title: A randomised controlled trial to test the effectiveness of decision training on assessors' ability to determine optimal fitness-to-drive recommendations for older or disabled drivers.

Authors:

Priscilla Harries (priscilla.harries@brunel.ac.uk)
Carolyn Unsworth (c.unsworth@cqu.edu.au)
Hulya Gokalp (Hulya.Gokalp@brunel.ac.uk)
Miranda Davies (miranda.davies@nuffieldtrust.org.uk)
Christopher Tomlinson (chris.tomlinson@imperial.ac.uk)
Luke Harries (lh511@cam.ac.uk)

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Author’s response to reviews:

Response to the reviewers

Thank you very much to the reviewers who have provided very valuable comments. We were pleased to receive the many positive responses and the recommendation to accept with revisions. We have responded to the recommended revisions below, point by point and we have highlighted the changes in the text in yellow so they are easily identifiable. We hope you will find the submission much improved, particularly the abstract which now conforms with CONSORT requirements.

Kristy Coxon (Reviewer 1):

Title:

A randomised controlled trial to test the effectiveness of a decision training aid on assessors’ ability to determine optimal fitness-to-drive for older and disabled drivers.
Overall summary:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this paper. This is an important area of investigation about the training of occupational therapists in fitness-to-drive assessment. With the ageing population, the need for driving assessments by trained occupational therapists will likely rise. Therefore, it is crucial to both safety and independence that fitness-to-drive assessments are accurate. As off-road assessments are imperfect, and conditions of on-road assessment vary, strategies to increase the accuracy of fitness-to-drive assessments by occupational therapists should be developed and evaluated. The strengths of this study are 1) use of a randomised controlled trial to evaluate the effectiveness of a decision tool to help novice therapists make fitness-to-drive assessments, 2) international collaboration and participants 3) blinding. The major limitation of this study is the large drop-out rate (43%). The authors have acknowledged this limitation. Despite this limitation, I feel this study makes an original contribution to knowledge in this area using robust scientific methods. This paper is generally well written, and results not overstated.

Please address the following issues:

1. Abstract: Further information is required in the methods/results sections of the abstract to meet the CONSORT statement requirements for abstracts reporting results of randomised controlled trials: http://www.consortstatement.org/Media/Default/Downloads/Extensions/CONSORT%20Extension%20for%20Abstracts.pdf. Details are missing re analysis, participants randomised vs participants who completed the study, confidence intervals to support results etc. The background information should be reduced. Please include all information required as per CONSORT statement.

Response: These have all been added and the abstract brought in line with Consort Abstract requirements. The background information has been reduced.

2. Training package/decision aid: It was not clear to the reader what the training package involved, and several different terms are used which is confusing for the reader eg. decision training aid, training package, training materials. Please review lines 30-47 on page 8. Eg. “The materials then included detailed information about how experts used cues when making fitness to
drive scenarios....” How was this achieved? Online written information? Worked scenario examples etc. Was there additional training materials as well as a decision aid?

Response: The term aid has been removed throughout and the term ‘decision training’ used consistently. Further details of the training materials used to provide the decision training and how they were used have been added.

3. Please check wording in first sentence under heading: Case scenarios and training materials.

Response: The sentence read as follows:

The same 64 case driving case scenarios used in the first Phase of the research, i.e. the optimal policy capturing study with the experts, were used in the RCT.

The word ‘case’ was repeated and so the first one has been deleted. Thank you for spotting this. It now reads as:

The same 64 driving case scenarios used in the first Phase of the research, i.e. the optimal policy capturing study with the experts, were used in the RCT.

4. Participants: Please define novices (who they are) earlier in the paper so the reader does not have to read ahead to clarify this.

Response: The novices and who they are have been added to the end of the introduction along with a justification as to why they were used as the novices and the valid role they hold in needing to be trained in this skill.

How were occupational therapy students recruited from university eg. flyer, announcement?

Response: Email communication from programme lead.

Were all occupational therapy students eligible to participate? Yes

Were any participants excluded? No
What was the time period for recruitment? 3 months

This information will increase the transparency of reporting and help the reader determine if an important difference between those who participates and those who did not.

Response: All aspects have been addressed and added to the text

5. Trial registration: Was the trial registered? Please state.

Response: The trial was not registered as it was not a clinical intervention trial. No registers exist for educational intervention trials. The following statement has been added after the ethics approval statement:

The trial was not required to be registered as it was not a clinical intervention trial; it did not involve any impact on patients’ care or clinicians’ practice as it did not use any health-related interventions to evaluate the effects on health outcomes. The study evaluated the impact of an educational intervention on pre-registration students’ theoretical recommendations on fitness-to-drive only.

6. Randomisation: Please provide further information as per CONSORT statement.

Response:

These details have been added in the text

Stacey George (Reviewer 2): This is an important study that adds new knowledge to the area of occupational therapy driving assessment. Some areas for improvement include;

1. Page 4 paragraph 2 Justification for methodology needs referencing and more thorough and accurate explanation. eg clinic based assessments- report on specificity and sensitivity to clearly detail the need for clinical judgement within the context of clinical practice. Also much examination is occurring of standardisation in terms of behaviours observed in on road assessments (VicRoads leading this) which needs to be reflected to be accurate. I agree that
clinical judgement is the key, however, both the clinic and on-road assessments still have a place with strengths and limitations.

Response: A further 4 references and details have been added to this paragraph. A summary of assessments and their limitations (including sensitivity and specificity) has also been added. In regards to on-road assessment, the P-Drive has been added to this section. The work undertaken by VicRoads remains unpublished. The first draft of the VicRoads work was only distributed internally to a small group of driver assessors (and sent to educators in other states of Australia only through internal networks). The second draft is currently in revision and a final draft is not expected for another 6-12 months at the earliest. Therefore, this work cannot be described, or cited yet.

2. Tables need to be stand alone with keys to abbreviations included

Response: The submission guidelines state that tables should be cited in the text and that tables less than one A4 can be placed in the appropriate location in the manuscript so as the tables fulfil this condition they have been left in the text as this appears to be allowed by the publishers. There was one abbreviation in Table 1 which was SD – this was already given in a key. There were two abbreviations in Table 2 which were SD and CI. A key to state these in full have been added stating SD: Standard Deviation; CI: Confidence Interval

3. Limitations- are pre registration students equal to novice OT driver assessors- generally need two years clinical experience prior to postgraduate training in driving assessment. This needs to be explored.

Response: additional text has been added to provide further explanation. Who the novices are has been added to the end of the introduction along with a justification as to why they were used as the novices and the valid role they hold in needing to be trained in this skill.
Editor Comments:

1. Title page

Please ensure each authors' institutional email address is present on the title page

Response: Done

2. Legends

For all supplementary files (which will be published with the manuscript if accepted and present) and figures, please ensure a legend is included at the end of your manuscript. Further details can be found on our submission guidelines pages: https://bmcmededuc.biomedcentral.com/submission-guidelines/preparing-your-manuscript

Response: Done