Changing Beliefs about Older Drivers Through Applied Theatre

H. Tuokko¹
A. Schoklitsch²
J. Love¹
R. Rhodes¹
A. Jouk¹

¹University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada
²University of Salzburg, Austria
Older Driver Safety

- Social issues are highly complex
- Emotionally-charged
Older driver safety

- fastest growing segment of licensed population
- high crash rate per miles driven (though not the highest)
- crash for different reasons than younger persons
- involved in different types of crashes
- once involved in a crash - highest mortality and morbidity of any age group
Background

- Applied Theatre
Background

Phases of the Research

1) Knowledge development and issue identification
2) Play devising
3) Audience reaction
Specific Research Questions

- What are the thoughts and beliefs about older driver safety held by different groups? What are the similarities and differences in the perspectives of these groups within the framework of the TTM? [Phase 1]

- Does engagement in the dramatic process through observation and discussion of a theatre piece on older driver safety change the thoughts and beliefs of the audience participants in accordance with the TTM? [Phase 3]

- What are the similarities and differences between the stakeholder groups in this regard? [Phase 3]
Knowledge development and issue identification

- 13 Focus groups
  - 7 older adults
  - 6 stakeholders

- 6 Independent interviews
  - Stakeholders
Background
Background
Themes
- Barriers
- Challenges
- Significance
- Intergenerational
- Transitioning
- Responsibility
- Strategies
- Policy & Practice
Background

- Play devising
The Research

- Audience reaction
Questionnaire Constructs

- Transtheoretical Model
  - Decisional balance
    - Pro-self
    - Pro-other
    - Con-self
    - Con-other
Questionnaire Constructs

- Transtheoretical Model
  - Processes of Change
    - Consciousness Raising
    - Dramatic relief
    - Environmental Re-evaluation
    - Self Re-evaluation
    - Social Liberation
    - Counter Conditioning
    - Helping relationships
    - Reinforcement management
    - Self Liberation
    - Stimulus control
Questionnaire Constructs

- Theory of Planned Behavior
  - Subjective Norm
  - Perceived control
  - Intention
**Questionnaire**

- **Length**: 3-4 items per construct (approx 17 constructs X 3 questions per construct = 51 questions).

- **Response format**: 5 vs. 7-point Likert-scale.

- **Questionnaire format**: intermingle constructs and organize questionnaire in a logical “category” format (e.g., positive attitudes, negative attitudes, alternative transport).
Two forms of questionnaire:

1) stakeholders – “older adult” as the subject of question; 23 survey questions, 9 demographic questions.

2) Older adults - “I” as subject of question; 51 survey questions, 12 demographic questions
The questionnaire was distributed prior to individuals seeing the play.

Immediately following the performance the same questionnaires were distributed.
Analysis

- Socio-demographic data:
  - 110 older adults
  - 137 Stakeholders
- Reliability of original scales
  - factor analysis, Cronbach’s α
- Pre-post mean comparisons (paired sample t-tests)
Final Reliable Scales – Older Adults

- Outcome expectance ($\alpha = .748$)
- Processes of change ($\alpha = .660$)
- Perceived Control ($\alpha = .538$)
- Pro-other ($\alpha = .653$)
Final Reliable Scales – Stakeholders

- Outcome expectancy ($\alpha = .687$)
- Processes of change (2 unrelated items)
- Pro-driver ($\alpha = .733$)
Older adults showed:

- an increase in openness to engaging in processes of change, $t(93) = -2.88, p<.01$

- a decrease in positive outcome expectancies, $t(97) = 4.55, p<.000$

- a decrease in the influence of others on driving, $t(97) = 3.88, p<.000$
Stakeholders showed:

- no change in positive outcome expectancies, \( t(132) = -1.093, p = .277 \)

- an increase in perceptions of importance of driving to older adults, \( t(132) = 3.181, p < .002 \)
Conclusions

- Impact of applied theatre can be viewed within the context of behavior change theory.

- The type of impact experienced may differ by type of audience.
Future Research

- Improve the reliability of scales

- Determine how best to assess the utility of applied theatre for facilitating change in beliefs and behavior
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Research Team - Students

- Jennifer Aitken (MSW)
- Alexandra Jouk (MSc, PSYC)
- Yasmine Kandil (PhD, THEA)
- Janet Love (MSc, PSYC)
- Angela Schoklitsch (PhD, PSYC, Salzburg)
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Theatre Company

Actors:
- Anne-Marie Cirillo
- John Krich
- Reid Sparling

Director: Trudy Pauluth-Penner

Assistant Director: Yasmine Kandil

Playwright: Warwick Dobson

Dramaturg: Monica Prendergast

Stage Manager: Lauren Jerke
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