

The public & the state expect the clinician to guide them in decisions regarding driving and health.

NY Times July 17, 2003

“9 Die After Driver Plows Through Outdoor California Market”

“A car driven by an elderly man plowed through a farmers market in Santa Monica, killing nine people including a 2-year-old girl and injuring at least 35 others”

A Physicians guide to Assessing and Counseling Older Drivers

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American Medical Association

Physicians dedicated to the health of America



*Developed with support from the
National Highway Traffic Safety
Administration as part of the AMA Older
Drivers Project*

AMA ethical opinion

Impaired Drivers & their Physicians

- ❖ **Assess**
- ❖ **Discuss**
- ❖ **Treat**
- ❖ **Restrict**

AMA Guide

- **Medical & Medication history**
- **Driving & transportation history**
- **Assessment of driving-related skills (*ADReS*)**
 - **Vision**
 - **Cognition**
 - **Neuromuscular function**

Driving history

(ask family!)



- Does he/she drive?
- Do you feel safe riding with him/her?
- Any crashes or tickets?
- Any close calls?
- Gotten lost?

Medical History

- **Cardiovascular disease**
 - *Angina, arrhythmia, CHF*
- **Visual dysfunction**
- **Cognitive disorders**
- **Neuromuscular disease**
 - *Parkinson's Disease, MS*
 - *Neuropathy, Stroke*
 - *Arthritis, joint replacements*

Diseases of the eye

- **Cataracts**
- **Glaucoma**
- **Macular degeneration**
- **Retinopathy**
(diabetic/hypertensive)

Diseases of Cognition/ Alertness/ Judgment

- **Dementia/ Delirium**
- **Stroke/ TIA/ Migraine**
- **Parkinson's / MS**
- **Head injury/ Seizures**
- **Psychoses/ Depression/ Anxiety**
- **MI/ Arrhythmias/ Syncope**
- **COPD/ Asthma/ Sleep Apnea**

Medical Red Flags

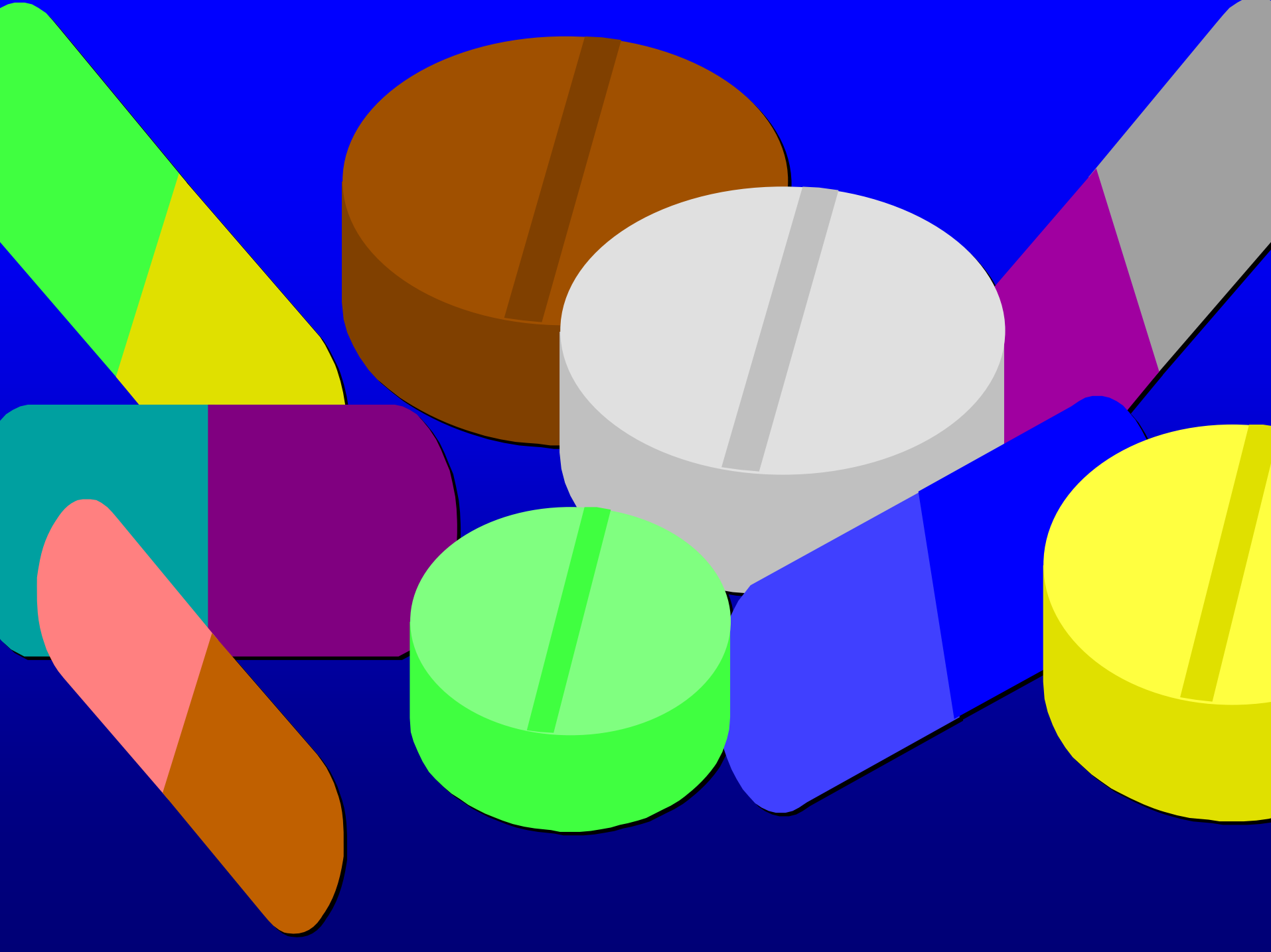


Conditions/medications that affect


- **Consciousness**
- **Alertness, attention**
- **Vision**
- **Cognition**
- **Motor/sensory function**

Acute events



- **Myocardial infarction**
- **Stroke/aneurysm**
- **Syncope and vertigo**
- **Seizures**
- **Trauma**
- **Surgery**
- **Delirium**

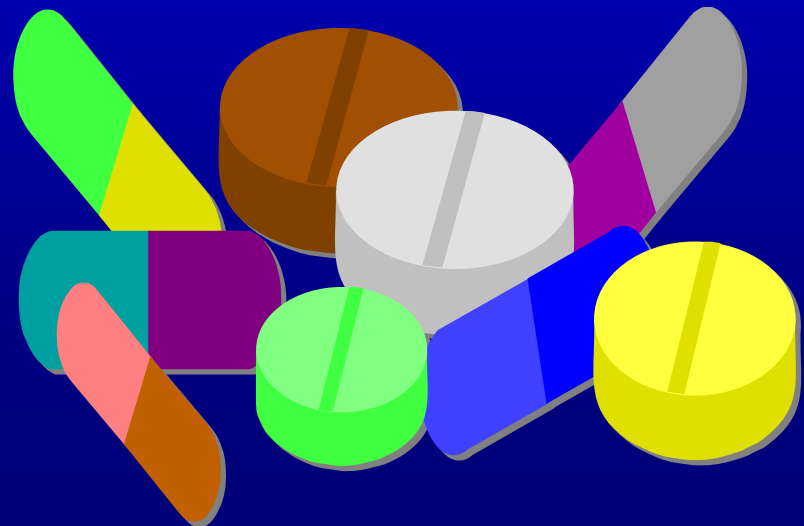


Drugs

-  **Benzos & other sedatives**
-  **Muscle relaxants**
-  **Alcohol**
-  **Narcotics**
-  **Stimulants**
-  **Cardiac meds**
-  **POLYPHARMACY**

Drugs: The ANTI's

-  **Cholinergics/Histamines**
-  **Emetics**
-  **Depressants/Psychotics**
-  **Hypertensives**
-  **Parkinisonians**
-  **Convulsants**



Management principles



- ❖ Prevent tragedy
- ❖ Refresher courses
- ❖ Health/ Fitness/ Meds
- ❖ Set goals: Prepare to quit
- ❖ Explore transportation options
- ❖ Enlist family
- ❖ Report to state

Referral Options



- ❖ **Occupational therapy**
- ❖ **Driver Rehabilitation Specialist**
- ❖ **Department of Public Safety**
- ❖ **Private Driving Schools**

Legal considerations

❖ **Protect the patient**

❖ **Protect the public**

❖ **Protect yourself**



State & Fed Law

- ✓ **All states allow doctor reporting**
- ✓ **Few states mandate reporting**
- ✓ **Some offer Immunity**
- ✓ **Some offer Anonymity**
- ✓ **VA tends to oppose reporting unless mandated by state**

Confidentiality



- ✓ **Patient information may be released with consent**
- ✓ **HIPAA allows information released to comply with state law**
- ✓ **Reduce impact of breaching confidentiality when reporting**

AMA opinion (cont)

Duty to report IF:

- ✓ State mandates reporting
OR
- ✓ Clear signs of impairment
AND
- ✓ Patient unlikely to stop

To Report

- ✓ Advise patient of intent
- ✓ Send **ONLY** key information
- ✓ Clinician can recommend
 - ✓ Further evaluation
 - ✓ License revocation
- ✓ Driver licensing revoked by state,
NOT physician

Protect Yourself Legally

- ✓ Know your state laws
- ✓ ONLY necessary information



- ✓ **DOCUMENT**

conversations, referrals,

recommendations, reports

State specific *Reporting*

- ✱ **Mandatory or Permitted?**
- ✱ **Immunity ?**
- ✱ **Anonymity?**
- ✱ **Accept reports from whom?**
- ✱ **Driver notified how?**

State specific regulations

- ☀ **Licensing renewal:**
 - ☀ **Frequency**
 - ☀ **In person vs mail**
 - ☀ **Vision test**
 - ☀ **Age-based regulations**
 - ☀ **Restrictions**

State specific policies on medical conditions

- ✱ Seizures
- ✱ Visual acuity/fields
- ✱ Uncontrolled diabetes
- ✱ Arrhythmia/MI with syncope
- ✱ Parkinson's disease
- ✱ Multiple Sclerosis
- ✱ Schizophrenia

Questions?

