

TENNIS PLAYING IS RELATED TO PSYCHOMOTOR SPEED IN OLDER DRIVERS¹

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Summary.—The study investigated the association of tennis playing and running with the psychomotor speed of older drivers. Thirty-six active male drivers (*M* age = 63.2 yr.) participated. A battery of four on-the road driving tests was performed by tennis players, runners, and a control group. Measures of simple and choice reaction time, movement time, and response time were collected under single- and dual-task conditions. A composite driving score was calculated from reaction time measures of all driving tasks to reflect a general drivers' psychomotor speed. Statistically significant differences between groups were found in a braking task; tennis players performed significantly better than controls in simple reaction time and response time. The composite driving score also differed between groups, and tennis players had better results than controls. Regular participation in tennis was related to psychomotor speed of older drivers.

Driving is a complex and interactive task that involves a variety of skills and requires the ability to make appropriate and timely decisions. For example, the speed at which visual information is processed is important to quick and appropriate responses in difficult or dangerous traffic situations (Anstey, Wood, Lord, & Walker, 2005). It is known that biologic aging has a negative effect on reaction time (RT) in highly complex tasks (Der & Deary, 2006). These detrimental effects may affect older adults'

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