

TITLE: Diabetes Mellitus and Driving

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AUTHOR(S): Mary K. Janke

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PROJECT OBJECTIVE:

To review the literature on insulin-treated diabetes and driving for members of a Medical Advisory Board subcommittee formulating guidelines for DMV Driver Safety in cases of diabetes mellitus.

SUMMARY:

Research results are mixed. There is probably some increased risk of a crash caused by hypoglycemia in insulin-treated diabetic drivers, but the risk does not appear great. What is most important seems to be education of patients and physicians. Patients should learn to monitor their glycemic levels closely, particularly before driving, and maintain their blood glucose at about 200 mg/dl to provide a safety cushion. Physicians should be made aware of the driving risks of overly strict glycemic control and the possible need to keep blood glucose levels somewhat higher than optimal during extended periods of driving.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

This information was used extensively in formulating the Diabetes Guidelines, approved in 1996.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Presented as speech to Medical Advisory Board's Diabetes Subcommittee, July 20, 1994.