Florida Department of Transportation Research

Identifying and Prioritizing Target Regions to Conduct Outreach Activities to Improve Safety and Mobility of Aging Population

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Current Situation

Just over 20% of Florida's population – four and a half million residents – are 65 years of age or older, and this population is expected to increase over the next 10 years, meaning more people in this age group will be on the road. Most of Florida's aging population is active and healthy, travelling Florida roadways in vehicles, on foot, or on bicycles. But, as people age, natural age-related changes can occur, which can impact their vulnerability as road users. This is seen in the higher-than-average crash rate involving this age group. The Florida Department of Transportation addresses the specific safety and mobility needs of aging road users through its Safe Mobility for Life Program/Coalition. Educating Floridians with materials and resources is key to the effectiveness of the program. With such a large population to reach, targeted outreach is essential to assure that areas where road users 65+ who are most at risk are prioritized for education and outreach.

Research Objectives

Florida International University developed a Geographic Information System-based approach to identify and prioritize target regions to conduct outreach activities that will help improve the safety and mobility of Florida's aging population.

Safe Mobility for Life Coalition focuses on improving safety and mobility for Florida's growing aging population.

Project Activities

Crash data for motorists or pedestrians 65 years and older were provided by the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles. Over 2,500 urban areas and 190 rural areas were identified as hotspots for 65+ crashes. Areas with a higher density of freeways, bus stops, and sidewalks had a higher density of these crashes, while areas with higher incomes and higher density of non-freeway roads had a lower density of these crashes.

Using crash and other data, the researchers developed criteria for targeted outreach based on the total crash rate, percentage of 65+ crashes, and urban or rural location. Criteria also included the presence of signalized intersections, roundabouts, and bus stops.

The researchers recommended quantifying the impact of outreach activities, which includes distribution of Safe Mobility for Life educational materials, workshops, and public service announcements. The researchers listed both outcome and process measures for evaluation of all outreach activities. For example, a primary outcome measure is crash data; the impact of a tip card about roundabouts would be revealed by the change in 65+ crashes at roundabouts in a target area. The researchers further refined the outcome measures and data needed for evaluation by outlining specific crash categories that should be reviewed. For process measures, the researchers listed suitability of the materials for the target group, the acceptability of the deliverers of the program to the target group, participants' opinions about the program, and participants' satisfaction with the program. The researchers also outlined the processes necessary to conduct this evaluation on an annual basis.

Project Benefits

The results will help the Safe Mobility for Life implement their proactive data-driven approach to eliminate aging road user fatalities while improving the safety of Florida roadways for all users.

For more information, please see www.fdot.gov/research/.