

two clinicians admitted to referring to the DVLA guidelines for further information, despite the latter guidelines having no legislative significance in Ireland, suggesting that doctors are seeking further information which is not currently available in the Irish road safety literature. Whilst seven clinicians reported their practice of advising patients on the potential impact of their psychiatric illness on driving ability, three doctors admitted to documenting this advice on every occasion. A larger proportion of clinicians reported advising patients about the effect of their medication on driving ability, but a much smaller proportion admitted to documenting this advice on every occasion.

A similar analysis of case notes in the UK found that the level of documented advice given to patients concerning driving was quite small, with analysis of 45 charts yielding such advice in only four cases.¹² Giving advice to patients and documenting the advice accurately in the notes is of paramount importance, as it would appear that legal precedent in the UK will establish medical negligence when doctors fail to provide such advice or have documentary evidence as proof of advice given.¹³

All of the clinicians surveyed reported that they would benefit from receiving more training in this area, which is not surprising, given the relatively small amount of information contained in the *Rules of the Road*.

Conclusion

The findings of this study suggest that there is under-documentation of advice given to patients regarding the effect of their symptoms or medication on driving ability, and

that clinicians need to improve their awareness of the driving status of their patients. Clinicians would benefit from training on what their responsibilities are in this regard. In comparison with the DVLA guidelines, the *Irish Rules of the Road* offer clinicians little support in giving specific advice to their patients, a situation which must be remedied if the best interests of patients and good standards of medical practice are to be maintained.

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