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Reported August 20, 2008

Antidepressants Impact Driving

(Ivanhoe Newswire) -- Antidepressants and driving may be a bad mix according to a new study from the University of South Dakota.

Researchers separated people on prescription antidepressants into groups according to how many symptoms of depression they showed. In a driving simulator they tested for common decision-making, steering, concentration and scanning.

Those who scored high on the symptom test did significantly worse in driving simulations than a non-medicated control group. Speed limit signs, animals and bicycles easily distracted them. They also didn't react as quickly to break lights, stop signs or traffic signals. However, those who were on medication but did not show symptoms of depression did as well as the people on no medication.

Researchers say although mood appeared to have a bigger impact on cognitive skills than medication, antidepressants seem to negatively impact not only what happens behind the wheel but how people react in other areas of life.

"Individuals taking antidepressants should be aware of the possible cognitive effects as they may effect performance in social, academic and work settings as well as driving abilities," the researchers wrote.

They also pointed out the rapid growth of antidepressants use, which has tripled in the last ten years, made these results especially significant.

SOURCE: Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, August 2008

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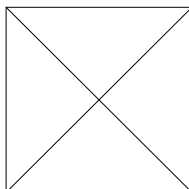
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