

## S29. DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF PRESCRIPTION AND OVER-THE-COUNTER DRUGS

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Prescription drugs are sold to the consumers with a prescription by a doctor. Non prescription drugs are sold without a prescription and are also referred as the over-the-counter (OTC) drugs. Driving under the influence of medications and drugs is one of the important risk factor for traffic safety. Prescribed or OTC drugs effect on the activity and function of the central nervous system may impair driving ability.

*Tranquilizers* (benzodiazepines), *hypnotics* (pentobarbital sodium), *analgesics/pain killers* (opioids such as oxycodone, hydromorphone), *antidepressants* (fluoxetine), *stimulants* (methylphenidate), *tricyclic antidepressants* (TCAs), *antihistamines* (diphenhydramine, chlorpheniramine), *centrally acting muscle relaxant* (carisoprodol), are the most hazardous drugs for traffic safety.

Recently, scientists, politicians and societies as a whole have begun to question the extent to which medicines and drugs contribute to traffic accidents, and what can be done about it.

Not all medicaments, even those in the same therapeutic group have the same effects on driving ability. A proposal has therefore been made to classify medicaments into three categories by (CPMP III/9163/90-EN). The performance related to driving or using machines, specify whether the medicinal product has (a) *no or negligible influence* (b) *minor or moderate influence* or (c) *major influence on these abilities*.

As a result, more effort must be made as much as possible by authorized organizations to avoid or reduce the occurrence of traffic accidents due to prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) drugs.