

Parents place fewer driving limits on the riskiest young drivers: New Zealand Drivers Study

Rebecca Brookland, Dorothy Begg, John Langley¹ Shanthi Ameratunga²

¹Injury Prevention Research Unit, University of Otago, ²School of Population Health, University of Auckland

Email:rebecca.brookland@ipru.otago.ac.nz

Abstract

Crash risk is at its highest once adolescents gain a restricted licence and can drive unsupervised. Evidence suggests that stricter parental restrictions on adolescents' driving are protective. The aim of this paper is to identify factors associated with parents placing limits on their adolescent's driving. This study was part of the New Zealand Drivers Study (NZDS), an on-going prospective cohort study of 3992 newly licensed car drivers. After adolescents (aged 15-17 years at learner licence) had passed their restricted licence test, 1200 parents reported on the driving limits they intended to place on their adolescent's driving at the restricted licence stage. Parents also reported their attitudes towards GDLS conditions, their own risky driving behaviours (Driver Behaviour Questionnaire, DBQ) and their adolescent's readiness to drive unsupervised. Adolescents reported their risky driving behaviours before licensing (driving illegally on-road); and at the restricted licence stage (DBQ), and vehicle access (restricted licence stage). Multivariate logistic regression results showed that (after controlling for parent gender, adolescent gender, and adolescent age at restricted licensure), the factors independently associated with parents intending to place fewer limits on their adolescent's driving were: parent disagreeing with GDLS conditions, parent being a risky driver, adolescent being a risky driver before licensing and at restricted, and adolescent having access to a vehicle that was considered theirs to use. While most parents intend to be restrictive on their adolescent's driving, a minority of parents, who are more likely to be risky drivers and be non-supportive of GDLS, intend to place fewer driving limits on the adolescents who would appear to need them the most –risky young drivers with unlimited vehicle access. Programme and policy need to be developed with an awareness that some parents may not be the best role models for young drivers.

Full paper not submitted