

“If they say go faster or something I’ll probably go faster” –  
Peer influence upon the risky behaviour of young novices

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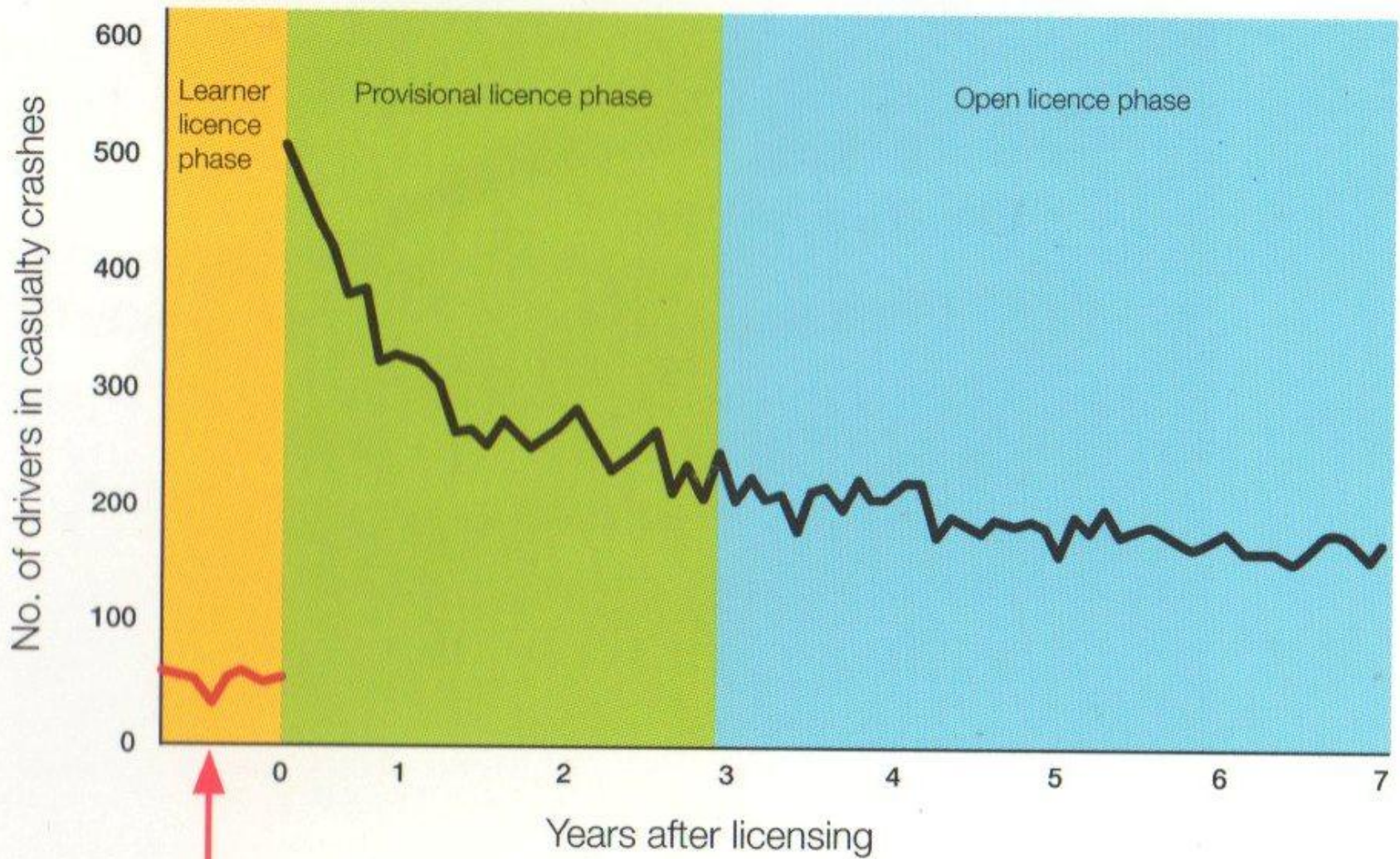


# Young drivers

- Australia, 2012
  - 17-25 year olds 13% of population but 22% of all driver fatalities
  - Three quarters of fatalities were male
- Earliest stage of independent driving most risky



# Number of casualty crashes by licence type



Your learner is here

# Young drivers cont.

- Peers influential in risky behaviour of adolescents
  - Normative to be risky during adolescence
    - Developing identity, testing boundaries
  - Normative social influence
    - Breadth of risky behaviours (e.g., alcohol, cigarettes)
  - Engage in risky behaviour to ‘fit in’
  - Reluctance to resist negative influence due to potential social sanctions

# Young drivers cont.

- Graduated driver licensing (GDL) is principal intervention in Australia
  - GDL programs differ by jurisdiction
  - In Queensland
    - Learner: 16 years minimum age, 12 month minimum duration, logbook recording minimum 100 hours *supervised practice, mobile phone restrictions, zero BAC*
    - Provisional 1 (P1): 17 years minimum age, 12 month minimum duration, *mobile phone restrictions, nighttime passenger limits, zero BAC, high powered vehicle restrictions*

# Methodology

- Study 1
  - Study 1A: Statewide online survey of 761 tertiary students aged 17-25 years with a Provisional licence
  - Study 1B: Small group/individual interviews with 21 young drivers with Learner or Provisional licence
- Study 2
  - Statewide online survey of 1170 young drivers when passed practical driving assessment
- Study 3
  - Statewide online survey of 390 young drivers from Study 2, six months later



# Results

# Results: Learner licence phase

- Pre-Licence driving (PLD) reported by 13% of Learners
  - 15.7% of Learners *in a relationship* reported PLD
  - 11.6% of Learners not in a relationship reported PLD
- Unsupervised driving (UD) reported by 13% of Learners
  - 16.2% of Learners *in a relationship* reported UD
  - 11.2% of Learners *not in a relationship* reported UD



# Results: Provisional 1 (P1) licence

- Peers were models to imitate or ignore
  - 20.6% reported friends thought bending road rules was okay
    - 27.5% of males, 16.8% of females
  - 44.4% reported friends did not always follow the road rules
  - 62.0% reported they knew risky young drivers
  - 10.5% reported they base their driving on their friends' driving

# Results: P1 licence phase cont.

- 38.7% reported friends had been caught for driving-related offence
  - 64.5% of young drivers detected offending during first six months of P1 licence reported friends had also been detected for an offence
- 39.7% reported friends had been involved in a car crash
- P1 drivers who reported their friends had crashed or been detected offending reported significantly more risky driving behaviour (BYNDS)

# Results: P1 licence phase cont.

- 10.1% reported pressure from *friends to bend* road rules
  - 15.9% of males, 7.6% of females
- 8.8% reported pressure from *passengers to bend* road rules
  - 15.0% of males, 6.0% of females
- 53.5% reported pressure from *friends to follow* road rules
  - 47.8% of males, 56.1% of females
- 60.1% reported pressure from *passengers to follow* rules
  - 53.0%, of males, 62.0% of females

# Results: P1 licence phase cont.

- Peers as source of punishment and rewards
  - P1 drivers believed reaction of friends depended on outcome: ‘bad’ versus ‘not bad’
    - *Called you stupid*: no bad outcome: 36.5%, bad outcome 61.6%
    - *Said nothing*: no bad outcome 21.4%, bad outcome 6.4%
  - More risky driving behaviour predicted if P1 drivers had seen their friends bend road rules, and if they “*made the trip more exciting*” by bending road rules
  - Less risky driving predicted if P1 drivers believed “*my friends would have thought I was really stupid*”



# Discussion

- Peers influential during all three licence phases (pre-Licence/ Learner/ P1)
  - Recognised by adolescents?
  - Recognised by parents?
    - Intervention?
  - Models to imitate and ignore
    - Risky friends' behaviour imitated by novices
      - Broad enforcement initiatives
      - Early and continued intervention?

# Discussion cont.

- Peers influential cont.
  - Sources of driving-related attitudes
    - Most friends believed to hold safe attitudes,
      - BUT engaged in risky driving
      - Intervention?
  - Source of punishments and rewards
    - Dependent on outcome
      - Intervention?
  - Pressure to follow rules
    - Capitalise on this in an intervention

# Strengths and Limitations

- Self-report data (surveys, interviews), but difficult to investigate any other way
- Low response rate in online surveys, despite incentives
- Greater participation of females (moderation analyses)
- Generalisability of findings

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# Questions?

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