

# Adolescent Risk Research Unit

Rise, and shine.

## **“I drove after drinking alcohol” and other risky driving behaviours reported by young novice drivers in Queensland, Australia**

Scott-Parker, B., Watson, B., King, M.J. & Hyde, M.K. (2014)

*Accident Analysis and Prevention*, 70, 65-73

doi: 10.1016/j.aap.2014.03.002

The full article is accessible at - <http://bit.ly/28Uk7uM>



### **Why do this research?**

Driving after drinking alcohol is associated with increased crash risk. We explored the behaviours of young drivers who reported driving after drinking and driving after using drugs.

### **What did we do?**

We had 1076 young drivers aged 18 to 20 years of age, from across the state of Queensland, Australia, complete an online survey.

### **What did we find?**

Generally, only a small proportion of young drivers reported driving over the alcohol limit (14%), and a very small proportion drove after taking illicit drugs (2.8%). More common risky driving behaviours included speeding and driving errors such as misjudging stopping distances. Young drivers also commonly reported driving when they knew they were tired (83.6%), and driving faster if in a bad mood or affected by their emotions.

Males more commonly reported driving faster than females, and a larger proportion of males reported driving after using substances than females. Drivers who reported drug driving were much more likely to report risky driving behaviours such as speeding and making driving errors. Young drivers who reported drink driving similarly reported more driving errors and more risky behaviours such as speeding.

### **What does it mean?**

Young drivers are particularly vulnerable because they are inexperienced drivers, despite completing a minimum of 100 hours certified supervised driving practice in a logbook in the learner licence phase in Queensland. Young drivers are also at greater risk because they are still developing physically, cognitively, socially, and psychologically.

We know that alcohol is related to greater crash risk and we know that drugs impair driving behaviour and important functions for driving (such as reaction times). Therefore, ideally we have intervention and enforcement efforts that target drivers of *all* ages so that drivers of all ages and experience are not driving whilst influenced by both licit and illicit substances. We also need to target young drivers to minimise their engagement in these risky behaviours as they are directly related to increased risk of engaging in other risky driving behaviours (such as speeding).