

Adolescent Risk Research Unit

Rise, and shine.

Young driver perceptions of police traffic and enforcement and self reported driving offences

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Why do this research?

We know young drivers continue to be overrepresented in crashes and this phenomenon is not unique to Queensland; indeed, it is a global phenomenon. An important part of minimising risks for young drivers are rules, including graduated driver licensing laws, and general road rules, with which all drivers must comply.

Police play a very important role in enforcing road rules to minimise crash risks for drivers of all ages and experience levels, particularly young novice drivers.

What did we do?

We administered an online survey with 238 young drivers aged 17 to 24 years who had a provisional driver's licence.

What did we find?

Young drivers who had greater sensation seeking propensity reported more transient rule violations (these are violations that can change throughout the journey, eg. driving in excess of posted speed limits), and more police avoidance behaviours.

Young drivers who avoided police enforcement activities engaged in more violations that were stable throughout the journey, such as not wearing a seatbelt or driving over the mandated alcohol limits of zero blood alcohol concentration.

What does it mean?

Ensuring that young novice drivers comply with road rules, whether they are general road rules or specific graduated driver licensing road rules, will improve their road safety. Informing young drivers that police will enforce these rules is a limited intervention measure, however.

Intervening in young driver road safety is complex, and understanding the impact of police enforcement practices plays an essential part to improving young driver road safety.