Mileage, car ownership, experience of punishment avoidance and the risky driving of young drivers
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Why do this research?
Young drivers are at great risk of being injured or killed in a road crash, therefore this research explores the relationship between mileage, having their own car, experiencing punishment avoidance, and self-reported risky driving behaviour for young drivers in Queensland, Australia.

What did we do?
1032 young drivers aged between 17 and 19 years from across Queensland completed an online survey the day they progressed from their learner to their Provisional 1 (P1) driver’s licence. Six months later, 341 of these drivers completed an online survey.

What did we find?
Most young drivers had their own car within six months of progressing from their learner licence to their P1 licence (78%), and young drivers with their own car reported more risky driving behaviours than young drivers who did not have their own car.

Young drivers who had their own car were more likely to report having a driving offence and that they had recorded some inaccurate entries in their logbook as a learner. Young drivers with their own car were also more likely to report that they talked themselves out of a ticket at the time that a driving offence was detected.

Young drivers generally paid attention to where Police were, whether it was a fixed operation or whether it was a random operation.

A quarter of young male drivers and an eighth of young female drivers deliberately avoided on-road Police presence. These drivers were also more likely to report they had previously talked their way out of receiving a ticket, and that they paid attention to on-road Police presence.

Young drivers who deliberately avoided Police on the road had greater sensation seeking propensity and were also more likely to be sensitive to rewards. Young drivers who avoided Police presence also reported considerably more risky driving behaviours including speeding, and that their driving was influenced by their emotions.
Young drivers who reported spending more time on the road were more likely to report that their parents had taken their punishment when they received a traffic offence infringement notice. Young drivers who drove longer distances on the road were also more likely to report previously having received a driving offence.

**What does it mean?**

Young drivers with their own car are more likely to engage in risky behaviours or talk themselves out of a traffic infringement notice, and are therefore at increased risk of a road crash.

The finding that young drivers who deliberately avoided on-road Police presence engaged in more risky driving behaviour suggests that enforcement efforts need to be random. Enforcement efforts should continue to be based on the deterrence theory premise of the **swiftness** of the punishment, the **severity** of the punishment, and the **certainty** of the punishment, particularly if we are to minimise the risky driving behaviour of young drivers during the P1 driving period.