

Adolescent Risk Research Unit

Rise, and shine.

The risky behaviour of young drivers: Developing a measurement tool

Scott-Parker, B., Watson, B., & King, M.J. (2010)
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The full article is accessible at - <http://bit.ly/292gNMJ>



Why do this research?

Young drivers are over-represented in car crashes, however intervention is hampered by the limitations in our understanding of factors contributing to young driver crashes. For example, crash analyses can indicate whether alcohol is involved and/or the driver was speeding. However, other factors, such as whether the driver was tired, cannot be measured through such post-crash objective measures. We wanted to create a valid and reliable instrument to capture driving behaviours that happen in the real world, that can do this in different populations over time, so that researchers, practitioners and policy makers have a free tool available to them that supports their understanding of the risky behaviours undertaken by their young novice drivers.

What did we do?

476 young drivers aged 17 to 25 years with a provisional drivers licence from across the state of Queensland, Australia were selected from a larger sample of 761 young drivers, such that half of the participants were female.

The online survey contained 63 risky behaviour items which were derived from the young driver literature and the graduated driver licencing rules in Queensland.

What did we find?

44 items within the Behaviour of Young Novice Drivers Scale (BYNDS) explained their risky driving behaviour. The BYNDS had five factors. The first factor was *transient rule violations* and it had 13 items, including behaviours that can change throughout the drive, such as driving speed. Factor two contained 10 items that related to *fixed rule violations*. These are things that were less likely to change throughout the journey, such as the blood alcohol concentration of the driver and the use of seatbelts. The third factor was *misjudgement*. These were driver errors such as exiting too quickly, or turning right in the path of another vehicle, and it contained 9 items. The fourth factor was *risky driving exposure*, which also contained 9 items. It captured risks for drivers of all ages, such as driving at night, and risks pertaining specifically to young novice drivers, such as carrying their friends and their passengers. The fifth factor contained three items and related to *driver mood*, such as driving faster if they were in a bad mood.

What does it mean?

Around the world, rather than relying on incomplete information gathered through tools such as crash analyses and blood alcohol concentrations, we now have a tool that can be used to understand a breadth of risky driving behaviours performed by young novice drivers (which increase their crash risk). The tool can be also used as an evaluation instrument in interventions by administering it pre-intervention and post-intervention in longitudinal study.