"My mother would freak out" – Understanding the influence of parents on the risky behaviour of their young novice drivers
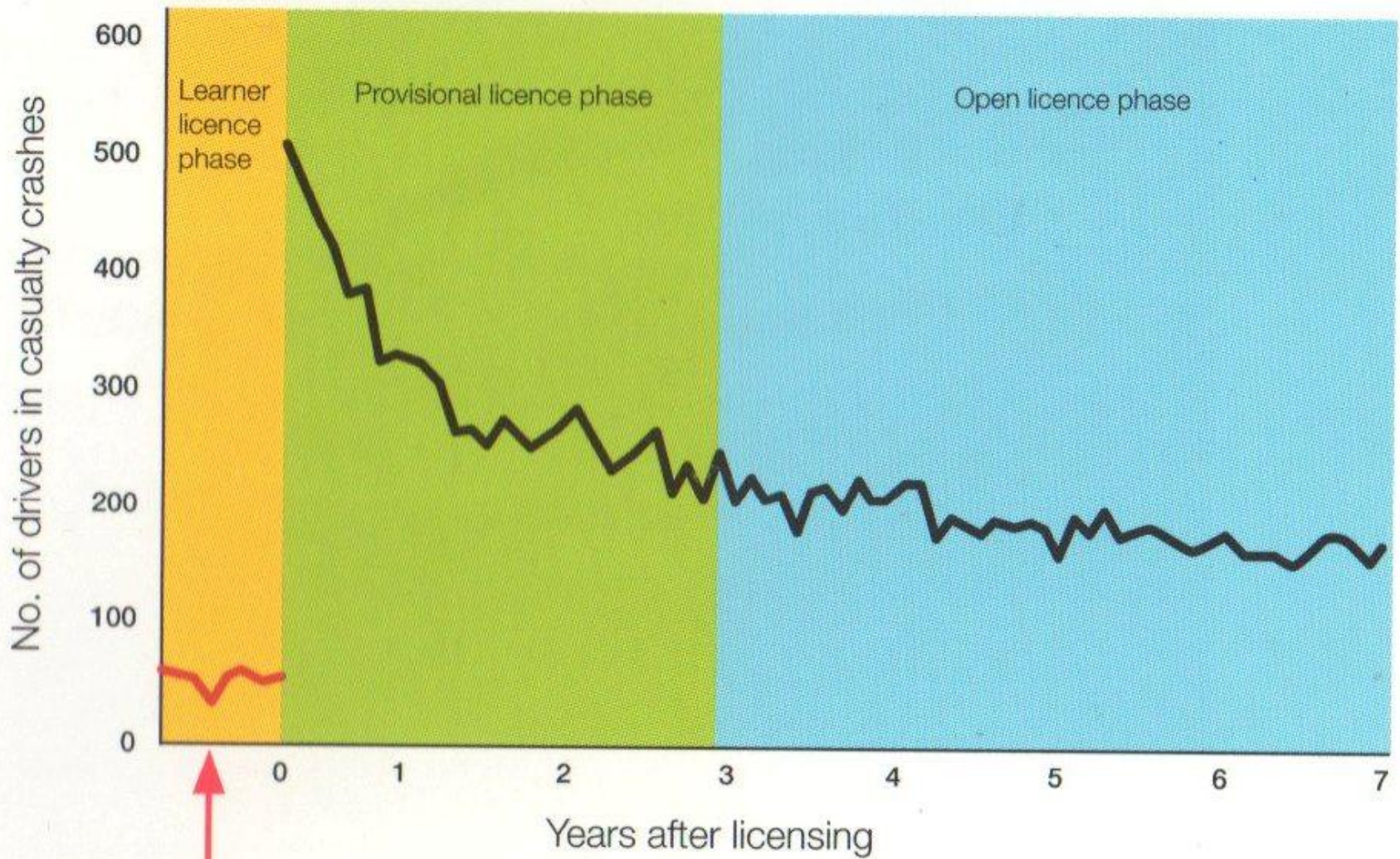## Dr Bridie Scott-Parker, Research Fellow

University of the
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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

Learner licence phase

Provisional licence phase

Open licence phase

No. of drivers in casualty crashes

Years after licensing

Your learner is here

Young drivers cont.

- Parents are pivotal in the driving careers of their children
  - Pre-licence: models of behaviours and attitudes
  - Learner licence: supervision, paying for lessons
  - P1 licence: monitor/regulate behaviour, supply vehicle

Young drivers cont.

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

Methodology

- Study 1
  - <u>Study 1A</u>: Statewide online survey of 761 tertiary students aged 17-25 years with a Provisional licence
  - <u>Study 1B</u>: 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

- Parents most common supervisor
  - *Mother* most common for 53% of females, 46% of males
  - *Father* most common for 28% of females, 43% of males
- Learner duration varies with age (and access to parents?)
  - *M* = 18 months, 16-17 year olds
  - *M* = 25 months, 18-19 year olds

Results: Learner licence phase cont.

- Parental complicity in rule violation?
  - 83% accurate logbooks, 4% 'extra hours'
  - Pre-Licence driving reported by 13% of Learners
  - Unsupervised driving reported by 13% of Learners
  - Risky driving behaviour: Speeding

Margin sped by (self-reported):		
< 10 km/hr	10-20 km/hr	> 20 km/hr
69%	32%	13%

Results: Learner licence phase cont.

- Parents as models
  - 96% of Learners reported parents did not think it was okay to bend road rules

  BUT

  - 28% of Learners reported parents were not always good role models
  - Parents talked themselves out of a ticket
    - 5% reported their mother had avoided ticket
    - 6% reported their father had avoided ticket

Results: Learner licence phase cont.

- 22% of Learners reported imitating parents' risky driving
- Parents caught for driving-related offence
  - 53% reported father had been detected offending
  - 42% reported mother had been detected offending
    - Learner of mother who had previous offence reported significantly more risky driving (BYNDS)
- Parents had been involved in a car crash
  - 28% reported their mother had previously crashed
  - 25% reported their father had previously crashed

Results: Learner licence phase cont.

- Parents as source of punishments and rewards
  - Learners believed reaction of parents depended on outcome: 'bad' versus 'not bad'
    - 75% of Learners expected punishment for bad outcome
    - 60% of Learners expected punishment if no bad outcome

Results: Provisional 1 (P1) licence

- Parents as models to imitate or ignore
  - 94% of P1 drivers reported parents did not think bending road rules was okay

  BUT

  - 26% of P1 drivers reported parents did not always follow the road rules
  - 23% of P1 drivers imitated parents' risky driving
  - More risky driving behaviour for P1 females predicted by seeing parents bend road rules

Results: P1 licence phase cont.

- During last six months:
  - Parents caught for driving-related offence
    - 5.6% reported mother had been detected offending
    - 8.2% reported father had been detected offending
  - Parents had been involved in a car crash
    - 2.6% reported their mother had crashed
    - 2.9% reported their father had crashed
  - P1 drivers who reported their parents had crashed or been detected offending reported significantly more risky driving behaviour (BYNDS)

Results: P1 licence phase cont.

- Parents as source of punishment and rewards
  - P1 drivers believed reaction of parents depended on outcome: 'bad' versus 'not bad'
  - More risky driving behaviour predicted if P1 drivers believed their parents would respond to risky behaviour with "*it is up to you to drive how you want*"

Results: P1 licence phase cont.

- Parents as source of punishment and rewards
  - Less risky driving behaviour predicted if P1 drivers believed they would lose the respect of their parents
    - Males: Less risky driving behaviour predicted if parents likely to punish young driver in some way (e.g., confiscating mobile phone)
  - Punishment avoidance
    - Handful of Learners and P1 drivers reported parents had 'taken the fine' for them
      - Perceived as rewarding by the risky young driver

Discussion

- Parents influential during all three licence phases (pre-Licence/ Learner/ P1)
  - Recognised during pre-Licence (0-16) and P1 phases?
    - Intervention?
  - Models to imitate and ignore
    - Risky parents' behaviour imitated by novices
      - Broad enforcement initiatives
      - Early and continued intervention?

Discussion cont.

- Parents influential cont.
    - Sources of driving-related attitudes
        - Most parents believed to hold safe attitudes,
            - BUT engaged in risky driving
            - Intervention?
    - Source of punishments and rewards
        - Dependent on outcome
            - Intervention?

Discussion cont.

- ## Parents influential cont.
  - ### Mothers particularly influential
    - Learner phase: Main supervisor, Learners of mothers with history of driving-related offence reported significantly more risky driving (BYNDS)
      - Intervention?

- ## Parents complicit in risky driving behaviour?
  - ### Poor/inadequate supervision (e.g., speeding)
  - ### Logbook inaccuracy
    - Additional support for parents during Learner phase?

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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