“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
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
    • Learner: 16 years minimum age, 12 month minimum duration, logbook recording minimum 100 hours supervised practice, mobile phone restrictions, zero BAC
    • Provisional 1 (P1): 17 years minimum age, 12 month minimum duration, mobile phone restrictions, zero BAC, nighttime passenger limits, high powered vehicle restrictions
Methodology

• Study 1
  • **Study 1A**: Statewide online survey of 761 tertiary students aged 17-25 years with a Provisional licence
  • **Study 1B**: 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Margin sped by (self-reported):</th>
<th>&lt; 10 km/hr</th>
<th>10-20 km/hr</th>
<th>&gt; 20 km/hr</th>
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<tr>
<td>69%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>13%</td>
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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?

Dr Bridie Scott-Parker, bscottpa@usc.edu.au