

Monitoring changes from 1999 to 2014 in the amount of supervised driving experience accrued by Victorian learner drivers

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Abstract

Newly-licensed drivers are over-represented in crashes. As higher levels of learner supervised driving are associated with a decreased crash risk post-licensing, road safety stakeholders have actively encouraged increased amounts of supervised driving since the mid 1990's in Victoria, Australia. VicRoads introduced a mandatory minimum 120 hours supervised practice whilst on a learner permit in 2007.

The Victorian Learner Monitor survey has tracked changes in driving experience (both supervised practice and lessons with professional instructors) accumulated by different learner permit holders across the years 1999, 2000, 2004, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2014. Each survey year, around 1300 Victorian learner drivers at different stages of learning to drive are surveyed, as well as 200 newly-licensed Victorian drivers.

A study was undertaken to analyse changes in learner driver experience since the first wave of the Learner Monitor survey in terms of a) progress in achieving the minimum target of 120 hours practice over the entire permit period and, b) progress in increasing weekly driving practice - both the likelihood of such practice in every week and the average practice time in those weeks where there is some practice.

This paper presents key findings from this study. Those aged 16 years at learner permit acquisition are now averaging 137 hours of practice. Those aged 17 at learner permit acquisition are now averaging 127 hours of practice. The results are discussed in terms of which learner subgroups require more targeted interventions to achieve the minimum supervised learner 120 hour practice target in Victoria.

Introduction

Newly-licensed drivers are over-represented in crashes. Crash risk is particularly high during the first 12 months of unsupervised driving. A Graduated Licensing System (GLS), which includes supervised learner driving, is a recognised countermeasure to decrease novice driver crashes (Senserrick & Williams, 2014). Research has shown a relationship between higher levels of supervised driving as a learner driver and reduced crash risk once licensed. In a Swedish study, learner drivers who made use of a longer learner period experienced about a 40% reduction in crash risk compared with learner drivers who did not. The longer learner period resulted in learners obtaining more supervised practice. Learners who made use of the longer permit period accumulated on average, 118 hours of supervised practice. Learners who did not make use of the longer permit period accrued, on average, only 41 or 47 hours of practice (Gregersen, 1997; Gregersen et al., 2000).

Over the past 20 years, in Victoria, there has been an active campaign to increase the amount of supervised driving experience accumulated by learner drivers in order to improve novice driver safety. An update to Victoria's GLS followed in 2007 and 2008. One of its aims is to encourage

learners to maximise the depth and breadth of their supervised driving experience. The relevant GLS components include:

- a minimum learner permit age of 16 years
- the requirement for learner drivers to accrue a minimum of 120 hours (including at least 10 hours at night) of supervised driving practice (if aged under 21 at licensing) and to record their practice in the approved VicRoads log book
- a minimum learner permit holding period of 12 months for those acquiring a licence when aged less than 21
- a minimum licensing age of 18 years.

These are all components of the ‘exemplar model’ of the Australian GLS policy framework, which was endorsed by Commonwealth, State and Territory Transport Ministers in late 2014 (Senserrick & Williams, 2014).

A preliminary evaluation indicates the revised Victorian GLS has been effective in reducing novice driver crashes. For example 23% fewer first year drivers aged 18 to 20 years (i.e., those expected to be most affected by the new GLS) were found to be involved in all casualty crashes compared with a control group of full licence holders aged 26 to 38 years at the time of analysis (i.e., those not expected to be affected by the new GLS) (Healy et al. 2012).

This paper presents the changes in experience (professional lessons and supervised practice) over the last 15 years in terms of a) progress across the surveys in achieving the minimum target of 120 hours practice over the entire permit period b) progress across the surveys in increasing weekly driving practice, both the i) likelihood of such practice in every week and ii) average practice time in those weeks where there was some practice. The method and results discussed in this paper originate from the report by Swinburne University of Technology, *Learner Driver Experience Monitoring 2014 – Statistical Report* (Meyer, Cunningham, & Rajendran, 2014a).

Females, learners residing in Melbourne, and those who obtained their learner permit at the age of 17 or older were identified in the first 1999 Learner Monitor report as averaging fewer hours of practice than other subgroups. Those who obtained their learner permit at the age of 17 averaged particularly low levels of supervised practice. Therefore changes in total hours of practice for these subgroups are of special interest in this research (Meyer, Cunningham & Rajendran, 2014b).

This research, which aims to determine if changes in practice hours across surveys conducted since 1999 have been statistically significant, is part of the final evaluation of the Victorian GLS, and will assist in determining its effectiveness. The results from the Learner Monitor surveys are discussed in relation to which subgroups require more targeted interventions to achieve the supervised learner 120 hour practice target in Victoria, the relationship to licensing trends and the effectiveness of the GLS in terms of learners obtaining the required practice hours.

Method

The survey

Since 1999, the Learner Monitor telephone survey has measured the supervised driving and driving lesson experiences of a representative sample of Victorian learner permit holders. Surveys have taken place in 1999, 2000, 2004, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2014.

These cross-sectional surveys all include about 1300 learner drivers at three stages of learning to drive and approximately 200 additional drivers who recently obtained their probationary licence.

Sample weights were introduced in order to ensure that for each survey year the results were representative of the learner population in terms of gender, region and age at permit acquisition.

Participants represent a cross-section of drivers in four approximate stages of learning to drive as indicated below.

Stage 1: 1 to 91 days (3 months) after obtaining a learner permit.

Stage 2: 92 to 212 days (7 months) after obtaining a learner permit.

Stage 3: 213 to 1461 days (4 years) after obtaining a learner permit.

Final Stage: the weeks spent in preparation for the licence test immediately before successful probationary licence acquisition (generally three to four weeks).

The sample of learner permit holders in each survey year was further stratified according to stage of the learner permit, gender, region of Victoria (Melbourne Metropolitan, Provincial Centres and the Rest of Victoria) and the age at which the driver first obtained a learner permit. Learner permit holders over the age of 70 and those who had held a permit for more than four years were excluded. Weighting factors were applied to each of the strata in order to ensure that the results were representative of the Victorian population of learner drivers at the time of each survey.

When considering unweighted data the 2014 learner permit holder survey participants were mostly aged 16 to 18 at interview (27% aged 16, 23% aged 17, 18% aged 18 and 32% aged 19 and above). There were 669 females and 663 males. These learners were younger if they resided in the Rest of Victoria (average age 18.8, versus 19.4 for Metropolitan Melbourne and 19.2 for Provincial Centres). The newly-licensed survey participants were mostly aged 18 and 19 (56% and 13% respectively), including 105 females and 106 males. Again those residing in the Rest of Victoria were younger (average age 19.2), compared with Metropolitan Melbourne (average age 21.7) and Provincial Centres (average age 19.6).

Learner survey respondents were asked about the amount of supervised practice they had completed in the last week and the amount of time they had spent in professional lessons in the last four weeks. Newly-licensed survey respondents were asked about the amount of supervised practice they had completed in the last week before passing the Drive Test and the amount of time they had spent in professional lessons in the last four weeks before they got their licence. Responses to these questions were aggregated to provide an estimate of the average total driving experience accumulated while holding a learner permit by that year's cohort of learner and newly-licensed drivers. Other questions were asked of respondents such as the number of crashes they had whilst on a learner permit, how long they held their learner permit and whether they participated in novice driver programs such as Keys Please. The questionnaire has been published in the 2007 Learner Monitor report (Pyta & Catchpole, 2007), but has been updated since that time (Meyer et al. 2014a).

Total supervised practice time in the previous week and total professional lesson time for the past four weeks is recorded for each participant, from which a total weekly driving time is calculated. This information is used in combination with the average time spent in each learning to drive stage (described above), to estimate the average total driving experience accumulated while holding a learner permit by that year's cohort of learner and newly-licensed drivers. These data have been used to determine if there are any significant trends in regard to the behaviour of learner drivers, especially in respect of gender, age at learner permit acquisition and region.

Data analysis

Three statistical methods were used for significance testing of the incidence of (1) professional lessons in the last four weeks, (2) supervised practice and (3) driving experience (professional

lessons and supervised practice) in the last week for each of the learning to drive stages described above. Due to the large number of tests performed, only p-values below 0.01 were generally regarded as statistically significant, however, for the comparisons between years only p-values below 0.005 were regarded as significant. Table 1 describes the three statistical methods used. Together these analyses allow the monitoring of learner driver preparation over the last 15 years (9 surveys) in terms of progress in:

- a. achieving the target of 120 hours of practice over the entire permit period
- b. increasing weekly driving practice, both the likelihood of such practice in every week and the average practice time in those weeks where there is some practice.

Table 1. Data analysis methods used

Variables under analysis	Statistical method	Description of statistical method
The likelihood of professional lessons in the last four weeks, the likelihood of supervised practice and the likelihood of either of these in the last week	Binary Logistic Regression	The proportion of participants in each stage reporting at least one professional lesson in the last four weeks, at least one supervised practice session in the last week and at least some driving experience in the last week were considered in three separate analyses Region, gender and age at learner permit acquisition were controlled while testing for differences between the survey years Odds ratios were calculated using 1999 as the reference year
The mean time spent in professional lessons in the last four weeks and the mean time spent in supervised practice and/or professional lessons in the last week, considering only learner drivers with non-zero practice times. A log transformation was applied to these times allowing the assumption of normal distributions in this analysis	General Linear Model analyses	For each of the four stages, the effect of year was tested for non-zero practice times for weekly professional lessons, supervised practice and total driving times, while controlling for region, gender and age at learner permit acquisition. Mean (log transformed) practice times were analysed Comparisons with 1999 were conducted for each survey year and tests were performed for linear trends over the years
Total practice times for professional lessons and supervised practice during the entire learner permit period Total practice times considered both the likelihood of practice and the average time spent practising in each stage by considering average times which included zero times for learner drivers who reported no practice	Z-Tests	Z-tests were used to account for the changes in total practice times during the entire learner permit period, which also considered any trends that have emerged since 1999, and changes that have occurred since the start of the GLS by also making comparisons with 2005 (nearest valid comparison year close to the introduction of the new GLS for comparison)

Results

Likelihood that a learner driver had a professional lesson in the last four weeks, supervised practice in the last week and driving experience (both professional lessons and supervised practice) in the last week

Binary Logistic Regression was used to determine the statistical significance of year, gender, region and age at learner permit, with odds ratios (OR) above one indicating an increased likelihood of practice and odds ratios below one indicating a decreased likelihood of practice.

The following results were found to be statistically significant ($p < .01$) for the likelihood that a learner driver had a professional lesson in the last four weeks, supervised practice in the last week and driving experience (both lessons and practice) in the last week:

- There were higher odds for at least one professional lesson for learners in Metropolitan Melbourne than in rural areas in Stage 2 (OR=2.22) and Stage 3 (OR=1.61), for females than males in Stage 2 (OR=1.57) and Stage 3 (OR=1.43), for learner drivers who were 18+ rather than 16 when acquiring their permit in Stage 1 (OR=2.77), Stage 2 (OR=3.03) and Stage 3 (OR=1.74) and for learner drivers who were 17 rather than 16 when acquiring their permit in Stage 2 (OR=2.41) and Stage 3 (OR=1.72).
- There were higher odds (OR=2.38) for at least one professional lesson in the Final Stage for drivers who were aged 16 years rather than 18+ at learner permit acquisition.
- There were higher odds of supervised practice among learners in rural than metro areas in Stage 1 (OR=1.71), Stage 2 (OR=1.75), Stage 3 (OR=1.49) and the Final Stage (OR=1.72), among males than females in Stage 2 (OR=1.67) and Stage 3 (OR=1.30), among drivers aged 16 than drivers aged 17 at learner permit acquisition at Stage 2 (OR=1.52) and Stage 3 (OR=2.44), and among drivers aged 16 than drivers aged 18+ at learner permit acquisition at Stage 1 (OR=1.96), Stage 2 (OR=2.38), Stage 3 (OR=4.35) and the Final Stage (OR=2.38).
- On average, in any year since 1999, the odds for:
 - professional lessons in the last four weeks in Stage 3 declined by 5.3% per annum for females aged 17 at learner permit acquisition (Wald=7.41, df=1, $p=.006$) and by 6.5% per annum for females aged 16 at learner permit acquisition (Wald=25.52, df=1, $p<.001$)
 - supervised practice in the last week for learners in Stage 3 increased by 11.5% per annum in the case of females aged 17 at learner permit acquisition (Wald=35.97, df=1, $p<.001$) and by 2.9% per annum in the case of females aged 16 at learner permit acquisition since 1999 (Wald=8.41, df=1, $p=.004$)
 - any supervised practice in the last week for learners in Stage 3 increased by 5.5% per annum in the case of females aged 17 at learner permit acquisition (Wald=10.12, df=1, $p=.001$)
 - professional lessons in the last four weeks for learners in Stage 3 declined by 4.8% per annum for females in Metropolitan Melbourne (Wald=24.38, df=1, $p<.001$)
 - supervised practice in the last week in for learners Stage 3 increased by 5.0% per annum in the case of females in Metropolitan Melbourne (Wald=30.44, df=1, $p<.001$)

Time learner drivers spent in professional lessons in the last four weeks, supervised practice in the last week and driving experience (both professional lessons and supervised practice) in the last week

Region, gender and age at learner permit acquisition had a strong impact on the (non-zero) time that a learner driver spent in professional lessons in the last four weeks, supervised practice in the last week and driving experience in the last week. The following results, using Generalised Linear Modelling with a log transformation for the times, were statistically significant ($p < .01$):

- Less time spent in professional lessons for those aged 16 at learner permit acquisition rather than 17+ in Stage 2 (14 minutes per week shorter on average: $F(1,187)=12.4$, $p<.001$), Stage 3

(5 minutes per week shorter on average: $F(1,1263)=45.52$, $p<.001$) and the Final Stage (6 minutes per week shorter on average: $F(1,1684)=10.43$, $p=.001$).

- More time spent in professional lessons for those living in Metropolitan Melbourne in Stage 3 (five minutes higher than in Rural Victoria on average: $F(1,1264)=7.39$, $p=.007$) and the Final Stage (twelve minutes per week higher than in Rural Victoria on average: $F(1,1684)=44.49$, $p<.001$).
- More time spent in professional lessons for females in the Final Stage (45 minutes for males and 51 minutes for females on average: $F(1,1684)=13.63$, $p<.001$).
- Lower supervised practice times in Stage 2 for females (82 minutes versus males at 103 minutes: $F(1,714)=10.87$, $p=.001$), Metropolitan Melbourne participants (80 minutes versus 105 minutes in Rural Victoria: $F(1,714)=8.975$, $p=.003$) and those who obtain their permit at age 16 years (77 minutes per week compared to those who were older at the age of learner permit acquisition of 108 minutes: $F(1,714)=23.99$, $p<.001$).
- An average increase from 1999 to 2014 in supervised practice times in Stage 3 of 2.8% and 2.7% per annum for females aged 16 and 17+ at learner permit acquisition ($t(1223)=5.12$, $p<.001$; $t(539)=2.664$, $p=.008$). Also an average increase of 3.0% and 3.8% per annum for overall driving experience for females aged 16 and 17+ at learner permit acquisition ($t(1311)=5.452$, $p<.001$; $t(749)=4.508$, $p<.001$).
- An average increase from 1999 to 2014 in supervised practice in the Final Stage of 4.1% per annum for females aged 17+ at learner permit acquisition ($t(243)=2.72$, $p=.007$).
- An average increase from 1999 to 2014 in supervised practice times in the Final Stage of 3.5% per annum for males in Metropolitan Melbourne ($t(443)=3.962$, $p<.001$). Also an average increase of 2.0% per annum for overall driving experience ($t(607)=2.60$, $p=.009$).
- An average increase from 1999 to 2014 in supervised practice in the Final Stage of 2.9% per annum for females in Metropolitan Melbourne ($t(412)=3.425$, $p=.001$).

High-level 2014 survey findings

The 2014 Learner Monitor survey indicated that the total amount of driving experience on a learner permit was 118.6 hours for that year. This is in contrast to the average of 82.9 hours in 1999. The 2014 Learner Monitor found females increased their total hours in supervised practice from 61.3 hours in 1999 to 101.6 hours in 2014 (Meyer, Cunningham & Rajendran, 2014a).

Practice hours (supervised practice and professional lessons combined) across the learner permit period (all stages)

Total practice hours across the surveys

Overall when considering all ages, there was a steady increase in practice hours across the learner permit period since 1999 (83 hours), with a slight decrease in 2008 after the GLS changes were introduced. There was on average a statistically significant increase of 4.6 hours per survey (2.5 hours per annum) in estimated total hours of driving during the entire permit period (estimated using simple linear regression analysis, $t(7)=11.75$, $p<.001$). Importantly the 2014 average is only just below the 120 hours mandated in 2007 (119.1 hours which does not match the figure of 118.6 hours total practice hours from the 2014 Learner Monitor survey mentioned earlier, because the comparison across years shown in Figure 1 requires the use of a consistently interpolated correction factor). The Z-test results found that in comparison with 1999, a statistically significant improvement occurred from 2005 to 2014 ($p<.005$). However, in comparison with 2005, there were

no statistically significant improvements over the survey years although significance was nearly achieved for 2014 ($Z=2.261$, $p=.006$).

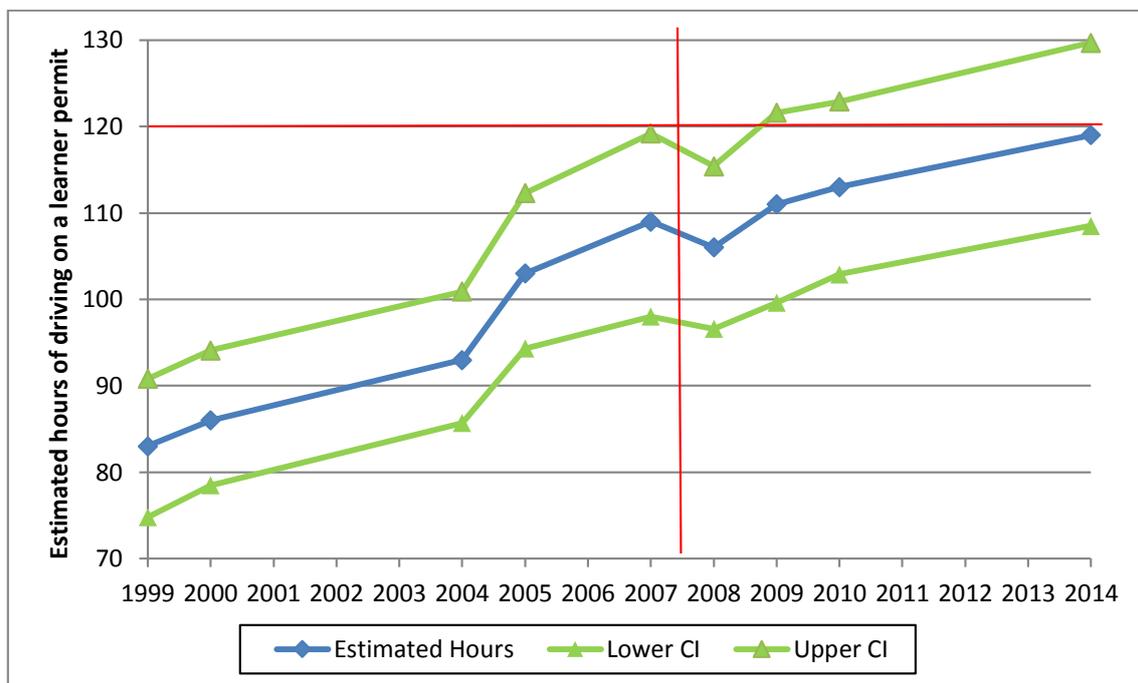


Figure 1. Estimated total practice hours (all groups) with 95% confidence intervals (note: vertical line denotes introduction of new Victorian GLS and horizontal line denotes the 120 hour practice requirement with linear interpolation between surveys)

Average increases in hours across the surveys by age at learner permit acquisition

The average increase of 10.1 hours per survey (5.3 hours per annum) since 1999 for all learner drivers who acquired a learner permit at the age of 17, starting from a base permit practice time of 46 hours in 1999, was statistically significant ($t(7)=8.625$, $p<.001$). However, the average annual increase in total practice times since 1999 was not statistically significant for those who acquired a permit at the age of 18 or older despite a 40% increase in average learner permit duration. For these learner drivers the improvement since 1999 (2.9 hours per survey, 2.2 hours per annum) was not large enough to provide a statistically significant trend ($t(7)=2.408$, $p=.047$). There has only been a 14% increase in the average permit duration for those who acquired a permit at age 16 so the average annual increase in total driving practice since 1999 (2.5 hours per survey, 1.2 hours per annum) was also found to be not statistically significant ($t(7)=1.721$, $p=.030$).

120 hours target and comparisons to 1999 and 2005

Those who were 16 at permit acquisition achieved significantly more than the target of 120 hours driving practice in 2014 (137 hours; $Z=2.626$, $p=.004$). The average total time for those who acquired their permit at the age of 17 was 127 hours, which was not significantly higher than the 120 hour target ($Z=.371$, $p=.645$). The total time for those aged 18 or older at learner permit acquisition was only 88 hours, significantly lower than the target of 120 hours ($Z=3.158$, $p=.001$).

Table 2 shows the result of annual comparisons (Z-test scores) to determine whether changes since 1999 and 2005 were statistically significant for each year by age at learner permit acquisition. For drivers aged 17 at learner permit acquisition there has been a strong improvement, which is especially noticeable after the GLS changes in 2007. For those who acquired a permit at age 16 there was an improvement in 2005 and also in 2014. There was no improvement for those aged 18 at permit acquisition.

Table 2. Z-Test Scores for total practice hours comparisons across survey years by age (* $p < .005$)

Survey year	Comparison with 1999			Comparison with 2005		
	Age at learner permit acquisition					
	16	17	18 +	16	17	18 +
1999	0.000	0.000	0.000			
2000	1.514	1.504	-1.734			
2004	1.850	2.913*	-1.621			
2005	2.609*	2.326*	0.532	0.000	0.000	0.000
2007	2.192	3.563*	0.984	-0.378	1.027	0.531
2008	1.893	4.286*	0.047	-0.750	2.523*	-0.509
2009	1.335	4.396*	0.732	-1.286	2.806*	0.251
2010	1.984	4.295*	1.775	-0.696	2.577*	1.231
2014	3.279*	4.143*	0.925	0.582	2.954*	0.363

* Statistical significance at $p < .005$ to allow for increased intensity of testing

120 hours target and gender/location comparisons

Z-tests were also used to compare mean total practice times with the target level of 120 hours. It was found that in 2014 females significantly exceeded the 120 hour target, with an estimated mean practice time of 152 hours in Metropolitan Melbourne and 126 hours in Rural Victoria. For females living in Metropolitan Melbourne and in Rural Victoria, the average increase per year was 6.9 hours and 7.1 hours per survey respectively, 3.8 hours per annum in both groups, starting from a base permit practice time of 86 hours and 78 hours in 1999. These trends were statistically significant in both cases ($t(7)=4.212$, $p=.004$; $t(7)=8.326$, $p<.001$).

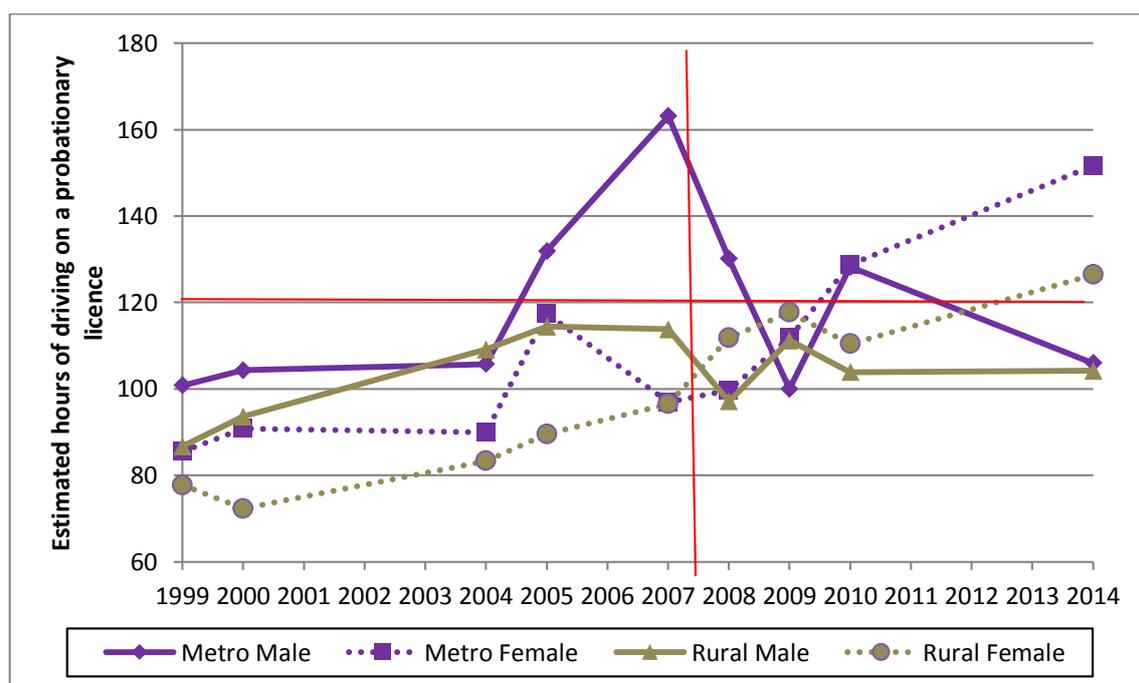


Figure 2. Estimated total practice hours by gender and region
(note: vertical line denotes introduction of new Victorian GLS and horizontal line denotes the 120 hour practice requirement with linear interpolation between survey years)

However, for males the average annual increase in total practice times since 1999 was not statistically significant despite close to a 30% increase in average permit duration. With respect to

males in Metropolitan Melbourne the increase in practice was on average only 0.8 hours per survey (0.9 hours per annum), starting from a base permit practice time of 101 hours in 1999. Males in Rural Victoria achieved an increase of 2.4 hours per survey (1.0 hours per annum) on average, starting from a base practice time of 87 hours in 1999. Clearly males in Metropolitan Melbourne started from a relatively high base in 1999, but their low level of improvement since then indicates that, like Rural Victorian males, their 2014 level of practice was relatively low compared to the females (Figure 2).

Discussion and Implications

The aim of this research was to determine if learners, including subgroups of learners, were reaching the 120 hours practice target and to indirectly evaluate the effect of the Victorian GLS in terms of learners achieving practice. The findings suggest the GLS has been a success for some learner subgroups, but not others. It was found that those who are 16 at learner permit acquisition exceeded the 120 hour expectation with an average of 137 hours. It is hypothesised that these learners wish to obtain their licence at the earliest possible age, 18, and are dedicated to achieving the target. Those aged 17 at learner permit acquisition, who obtained 127 hours, also appear to have this goal.

Learners who acquired their permits at age 18 or more were significantly below the 120 hour target in 2014 with an average time of only 88 hours. These learner drivers improved very little since 1999 (only 2.2 hours per annum), suggesting that the GLS changes had little if any impact on this subgroup of learner drivers. One reason for this could be the recent trend in highly motorised countries of obtaining a licence at a later age. For instance, Delbosc and Currie (2013) found decreasing licensing trends in 9 of 14 countries, with a one percent per annum decline among 18 to 23 year olds in Victoria. The authors indicated the decline to be related to life stage, such as increasing participation in education, decreasing full-time employment rates and delaying marriage and children. The authors considered that the GLS may act as a barrier to young people obtaining a licence, but considered the impact to be small, especially as licensing rates began to drop prior to the GLS in some countries.

The comparatively low number of practice hours obtained by 18+ year olds could occur for life stage reasons, and possibly avoidance of the requirements of the GLS. However, respondents to the 2014 Learner Monitor survey indicated they had been too busy to learn to drive any sooner and/or they had not needed to drive when asked if they expected to delay licensing until the age of 21 or older. Regardless of the reasons why learners delay licensing, there is a road safety benefit occurring from the protection effect of increased age at licensing (greater maturation (Senserrick & Williams, 2014)).

Females, those residing in Melbourne, and those who obtained their learner permit at the age of 17 or older were identified in the first 1999 Learner Monitor report as averaging fewer hours of practice than other subgroups. The increases observed among these subgroups, particularly following the introduction of the GLS, indicate they are now achieving the 120 hour target. Some of this may be due to extending the minimum period for which the learner permit must be held from 6 to 12 months (effect of the GLS) which provides more time for practice. The average practice time per week has also increased for these two groups of learner drivers, which may be motivated by the GLS 120 hour requirement.

However, male learners are a problem subgroup with no statistically significant average annual improvement since 1999, and Metropolitan Melbourne males' practice since the introduction of the GLS has reduced, which could be a correction of overall trends (there was a spike in their practice before the GLS). In addition, males are not meeting the 120 hour target, suggesting that male-

targeted interventions are now required. Those 18 years and older will also require intervention in addition to males in order to benefit from a reduced crash risk at licensing. Victoria's road safety partners will need to work together on relevant programs for these subgroups. It may also be worthwhile examining differences between learners intending to get a licence before or after turning 21, as they may still plan to obtain 120 hours of supervised practice.

The overall results of the Learner Monitor from 1999 to 2014 are encouraging, with an increase in practice hours from 83 hours to 119 for all learners. The amount of practice Victorian learners are achieving is commendable as this will decrease their crash risk once licensed. Victoria and New South Wales (NSW) mandate the highest number of hours (120), followed by Queensland (100), with other states mandating less or no practice hours. On this basis it might be expected that Victorian learners achieve the highest levels of practice in Australia. Learners achieving high practice hours in Victoria may also be linked to the 18 year old licensing age (all other states have a lower licensing age) and the fact that 16 year olds hold the learner permit for at least two years (Senserrick & Williams, 2014).

Conclusion

Over the past 20 years road safety partners across Victoria have worked together to increase community understanding and acceptance of the protective benefits accruing from 120 hours of supervised practice. VicRoads, the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) and Community Road Safety Councils all introduced programs, including publicity, to promote increased driving practice for learner drivers and their parents/supervising drivers in Victoria. Bringing the community along on the journey and gaining their acceptance for this road safety countermeasure has been an important factor in achieving the acceptance of the legislated 120 hour requirement. The Learner Monitor surveys demonstrate that these combined efforts are associated with an increase in the amount of time spent in supervised practice, especially amongst learners from the original 'most at risk' subgroups. However, there is still work to be done with those aged 18 or more at learner permit acquisition and males in general. This research will form part of Victoria's overall evaluation of its GLS effectiveness, which is a project still in progress.

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