

Gender Differences in Perceptions and Self-Reported Driving Behaviors Among Teenagers. (Poster)

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Introduction:

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that motor vehicle crashes (MVCs) are the leading cause of injury and death among U.S. teenagers, and disproportionately affect males. Many of these crashes are preventable. Among preventable causes of MVCs involving teenage drivers, distracted-driving continues to be a serious public health problem.



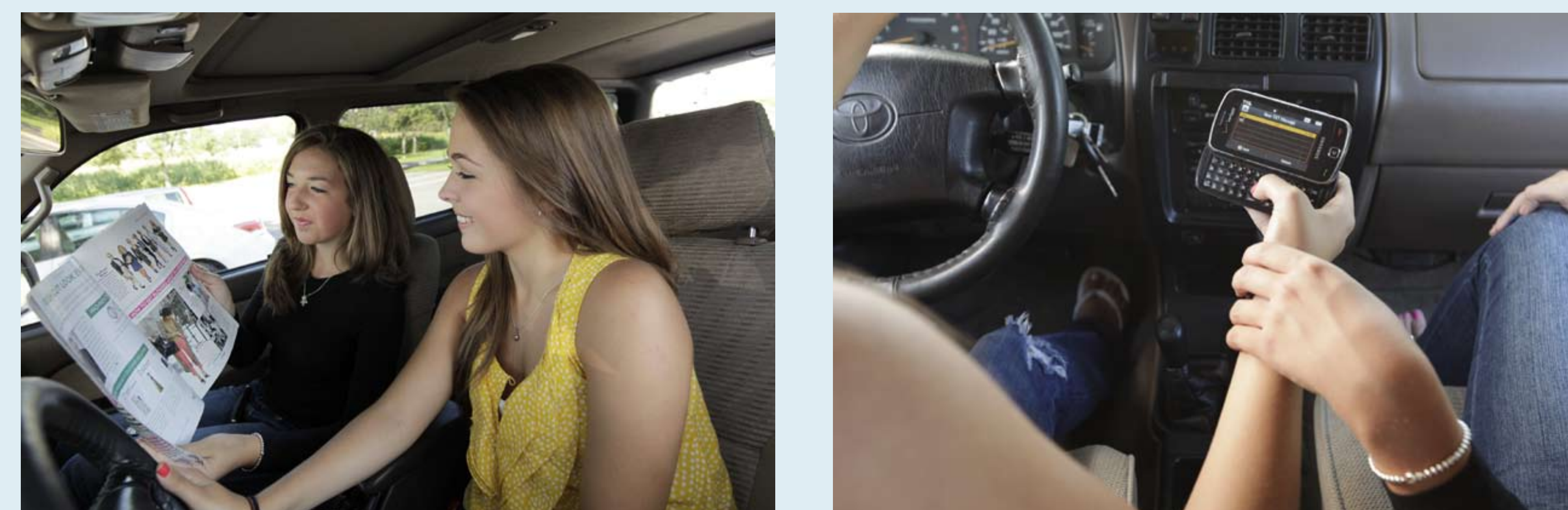
Study Objectives:

To determine gender differences in teenage drivers' self-perceptions of safe driving behaviors, and self-reported risk behaviors and distractions while driving.

Methods:

We prospectively surveyed a cohort of teenage drivers in three school districts (four high schools, total) in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Gender comparisons were made between self-reported perceptions and self-reported driving behaviors.

Examples of Distracted Driving & No Seatbelt



Results:

Seven-hundred-forty-three teenage drivers completed surveys. Males (52%) and females (48%) were equally distributed; 32% of males reported that they were extremely safe drivers, while only 18% of females reported that they were extremely safe drivers ($p < 0.001$). Significantly more females (91%) compared to males (77%) reported always wearing their seatbelts ($p < 0.001$). Female drivers were more likely than male drivers to self-report that they always make their passengers wear a seat belt (76% vs. 63%, $p < 0.001$). A higher proportion of males (68%) reported using their cell phones while driving compared to females (56%) ($p = 0.004$) and 42% of males reported texting while driving compared to 34% of females ($p = 0.037$).

Table 1. Demographics by School and Overall Summary Statistics are based on 756 Subjects

	Schools				All Schools Combined
	1	2	3	4	
Gender					
Male	132 (53)	94 (48)	75 (54)	91 (53)	392 (52)
Female	117 (47)	100 (52)	65 (46)	82 (47)	364 (48)
Age (years)	16.8+/-16.77	16.8+/-16.79	16.7+/-16.74	16.8+/-16.75	16.8+/-16.76
Hours Driven/Week	10+/-15.79	12.1+/-15.99	9.1+/-8.78	7.9+/-10.16	9.9+/-13.59
Miles Driven/Week	84.8+/-86.87	88.7+/-138.46	88.7+/-129.4	71.3+/-87.94	86.9+/-102.93

Schools: 1=Phillipsburg, 2=Liberty, 3=Freedom, 4=SL

Table 2. Teenagers' Perception of Driver Safety

	Gender	Extremely Unsafe N (%)	Unsafe N (%)	Extremely Safe N (%)	Safe N (%)	Total
How safe of a driver are you? (Frequency Not Reported = 13)	Males	5 (1.29)	23 (5.94)	236 (60.98)	123 (31.78)	387 (52.09)
	Females	3 (0.84)	18 (5.06)	271 (76.12)	64 (17.98)	356 (47.91)
	TOTAL	8 (1.08)	41 (5.52)	507 (68.24)	187 (25.17)	743 (100.00)

Table 3. Teenagers' Perception of Driver Safety

	Gender	Always N (%)	Usually N (%)	Sometimes N (%)	Never N (%)	Total
How often do you wear your seatbelt? (Frequency Not Reported = 5)	Males	299 (76.67)	54 (13.85)	25 (6.41)	12 (3.08)	390 (51.93)
	Females	328 (90.86)	19 (5.26)	10 (2.77)	4 (1.11)	361 (48.07)
	TOTAL	627 (83.49)	73 (9.72)	35 (4.66)	16 (2.13)	751 (100.00)

Conclusion:

Teenage male drivers perceive themselves to be safe drivers, but report engaging in more risky behaviors compared to females. These results suggest that there is an opportunity for gender specific educational and injury prevention programs for teen drivers. Additionally, the injury prevention efforts could be aimed at both teenagers' perceptions of their driving behaviors and at reducing risky driving behaviors.

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