

The Contribution of Parents' Driving Behavior, Family Climate for Road Safety, and Parent-Targeted Intervention to Young Male Driving Behavior

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Abstract

One of the prominent issues in contemporary research on young drivers deals with the mechanisms underlying parents' influences on their offspring's driving behavior. The present study combines two sets of data: the first gathered from in-vehicle data recorders tracking the driving of parents and their teenage sons, and the second derived from self-report questionnaires completed by the young drivers. The aim was to evaluate the contribution of parents' driving behavior, participation in a parent-targeted intervention, and the teen drivers' perception of the family climate for road safety, to the driving behavior of young drivers during solo driving. The data was collected over the course of 12 months, beginning with the licensure of the teen driver, and examined a sample of 166 families who were randomly assigned to one of three intervention groups (receiving different forms of feedback) or a control group (with no feedback). Findings indicate that young male drivers' risky driving events rate was positively associated with that of their parents. In addition, any type of intervention led to a lower rate of risky driving events among young drivers compared to the control group. Finally, a higher perception of parents as not committed to safety and lower perceived parental monitoring were related to a higher risky driving events rate among young drivers. The results highlight the need to consider a complex set of antecedents in parents' attitudes and behavior, as well as the family's safety atmosphere, in order to better understand young drivers' risky driving. The practical implications refer to the effective use of the family as a lever in the attempt to promote safety awareness among young drivers.

Key Words: Young Drivers, In-Vehicle Data Recorder, Parents