

JOURNAL OF ADOLESCENT HEALTH

Official Publication of the Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine



NEWS RELEASE UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL APRIL 17, 2014, 12:01 AM ET

Contact:
Eileen Leahy
Elsevier
Tel: 732-238-3628
e.leahy@elsevier.com

Distracted Driving Among Teens Threatens Public Health and Safety Insights From Key Investigators Provide New Answers, Reports the *Journal of Adolescent Health*

Philadelphia, PA, April 17, 2014 – Motor vehicle crashes rank as the leading cause of teen deaths and in 2008, 16% of all distraction-related fatal automobile crashes involved drivers under 20 years of age. These grim statistics, coupled with an increasing nationwide awareness of the dangers of distracted driving for all ages, prompted the publication of an important supplement to the *Journal of Adolescent Health* that explores the causes of distracted driving and offers practical recommendations to reduce the incidence of distracted driving among teens.

“Although public health efforts have made some progress in reducing risk of adolescent motor vehicle crashes over the last three decades, new technologies and evolving behavior patterns have focused attention on the risk of distracted driving,” observes Guest Editor C. Raymond Bingham, PhD, from the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute, Ann Arbor, MI. “For many of the same reasons that alcohol-impaired driving represents a distinct risk for adolescents, distracted driving has an elevated impact on this age group. The unique challenge posed by the proliferation of new technological distractions may accelerate this risk behavior and may lend itself to innovative prevention efforts.”

The issues involved are not simple. While there are many different causes of distracted driving, the aim of the supplement is to take a broad view of the topic instead of focusing on the individual sources of distraction. The goal is to give researchers, practitioners, lawmakers, parents, and teens a better understanding of why distracted driving is a potentially deadly activity and steps that might be taken to reduce the number of crashes it causes.

An important issue for the public as well as legislators, former United States Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood comments, “This special *Journal of Adolescent Health* supplement brings the important issue of driver distraction and young drivers into focus. The articles presented cover a variety of the

influences on young drivers' distractibility and safety as well as the important influence of parents, peers, and technology. While there is no single (simple or quick) solution to this problem, this research can lay a substantive foundation for additional debate and informed and effective policies to address the complex problem of distracted driving among young drivers and the larger driving population as a whole."

The supplement examines the issues surrounding distracted driving by teens, exploring developmental states and changes that are associated with adolescents' distractibility and their relation to driving, examining patterns of distraction among newly licensed adolescents as well as brain function, considering the potential role played by parental modeling of distracted behavior while driving, accounting for the role of technology and the influence of peer passengers and society norms, and investigating policy, legislation, and intervention.

One of the ideas that the supplement highlights is that there are a multitude of complicated factors that result in teens being more vulnerable to the effects of distracted driving than other age groups. In the article "Adolescence, Attention Allocation, and Driving Safety," by Daniel Romer, PhD, et al, the authors explore the explanations behind why teens fail to pay attention, including brain immaturity and lack of driving experience. Their review points to extensive new driver training as a way to help compensate for the unique problems teenage drivers face when it comes to focusing on the road.

Another issue the supplement addresses is what can specifically be done to prevent distracted driving among teens. "Young Driver Distraction: State of the Evidence and Directions for Behavior Change Programs," by Lisa Buckley, PhD, et al, discusses different methods used to both educate and prevent distracted driving. While the authors argue that legislative and contextual interventions can be effective prevention strategies, they also recognize that there is an unmet need for behavioral change programs designed to pinpoint the most at-risk groups, identify their risk and protective factors, and then design effective interventions tailored to their specific needs.

Current evidence regarding laws to limit cell phone use for talking or texting that are now in place in many jurisdictions suggests that these laws are either ineffective or may have an unintended effect, according to Johnathon P. Ehsani, PhD, and co-authors in "The Impact of Michigan's Text Messaging Restriction on Motor Vehicle Crashes."

Dr. Bingham concludes, "In the near future, and perhaps for years to come, reducing driver distraction to increase roadway safety is going to be increasingly challenging. As automated functions increase in vehicles, drivers are likely to feel that their attention to the road is less necessary." He continues, "Cultural attitudes and values and the public's tolerance for distracted driving need to be targeted by informative and persuasive public health campaigns that make evident the need and create a public demand for individual behavior change."

#

NOTES FOR EDITORS

Driver Distraction: A Perennial but Preventable Public Health Threat to Adolescents

Guest Editor: C. Raymond Bingham, PhD, University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute, Ann Arbor, MI

Journal of Adolescent Health, Volume 54, Supplement 5S (May 2014), published by Elsevier

It will be openly available at www.jahonline.org.

Table of Contents:

Editorial: Current Knowledge on Adolescent Driver Distraction

C. Raymond Bingham

Driver Distraction: A Perennial but Preventable Public Health Threat to Adolescents

C. Raymond Bingham

Adolescence, Attention Allocation, and Driving Safety

Daniel Romer, Yi-Ching Lee, Catherine C. McDonald, and Flora K. Winston

Young Driver Distraction: State of the Evidence and Directions for Behavior Change Programs

Lisa Buckley, Rebekah L. Chapman, and Mary Sheehan

Neural Responses to Exclusion Predict Susceptibility to Social Influence

Emily B. Falk, Christopher N. Cascio, Matthew Brook O'Donnell, Joshua Carp, Francis J. Tinney Jr., C. Raymond Bingham, Jean T. Shope, Marie Claude Ouimet, Anuj K. Pradhan, and Bruce G. Simons-Morton

Social Norms and Risk Perception: Predictors of Distracted Driving Behavior Among Novice Adolescent Drivers

Patrick M. Carter, C. Raymond Bingham, Jennifer S. Zakrajsek, Jean T. Shope, and Tina B. Sayer

Peer Passenger Influences on Male Adolescent Drivers' Visual Scanning Behavior During Simulated Driving

Anuj K. Pradhan, Kaigang Li, C. Raymond Bingham, Bruce G. Simons-Morton, Marie Claude Ouimet, and Jean T. Shope

Distracted Driver Behaviors and Distracting Conditions Among Adolescent Drivers: Findings From a Naturalistic Driving Study

Robert D. Foss and Arthur H. Goodwin

Keep Your Eyes on the Road: Young Driver Crash Risk Increases According to Duration of Distraction

Bruce G. Simons-Morton, Feng Guo, Sheila G. Klauer, Johnathon P. Ehsani, and Anuj K. Pradhan

The Impact of Michigan's Text Messaging Restriction on Motor Vehicle Crashes

Johnathon P. Ehsani, C. Raymond Bingham, Edward Ionides, and David Childers

Full text of the articles is available to credentialed journalists upon request. Contact Eileen Leahy at 732-238-3628 or e.leahy@elsevier.com to obtain copies. Journalists wishing to interview C. Raymond Bingham or other authors should contact Francine Romine at 734-763-4668 or fromine@umich.edu.

ABOUT THE JOURNAL OF ADOLESCENT HEALTH (www.jahonline.org)

The *Journal of Adolescent Health* is a multidisciplinary scientific journal that seeks to publish new research findings in the field of Adolescent Medicine and Health ranging from the basic biological and behavioral sciences to public health and policy. It is the official publication of the Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine (SAHM), www.adolescenthealth.org, a multidisciplinary organization committed to improving the health and well-being of adolescents. One of the Society's primary goals is the development, synthesis, and dissemination of scientific and scholarly knowledge unique to the health needs of adolescents. To meet this goal, the Society established the *Journal of Adolescent Health* in 1980.

According to the *Journal Citation Reports*®, published by Thomson Reuters, *Journal of Adolescent Health* has a 2012 Impact Factor of 2.966, and is ranked 11th of 121 journals in Pediatrics.

ABOUT ELSEVIER

Elsevier is a world-leading provider of scientific, technical and medical information products and services. The company works in partnership with the global science and health communities to publish more than 2,000 journals, including *The Lancet* (www.thelancet.com) and *Cell* (www.cell.com), and close to 20,000 book titles, including major reference works from Mosby and Saunders. Elsevier's online solutions include ScienceDirect (www.sciencedirect.com), Scopus (www.scopus.com), SciVal (<http://info.scival.com>), Reaxys (www.elsevier.com/reaxys), ClinicalKey (www.clinicalkey.com), and Mosby's Suite (www.confidenceconnected.com), which enhance the productivity of science and health professionals, helping research and health care institutions deliver better outcomes more cost-effectively.

A global business headquartered in Amsterdam, Elsevier (www.elsevier.com) employs 7,000 people worldwide. The company is part of Reed Elsevier Group plc (www.reedelsevier.com), a world leading provider of professional information solutions. The group employs more than 30,000 people, including more than 15,000 in North America. Reed Elsevier Group plc is owned equally by two parent companies, Reed Elsevier PLC and Reed Elsevier NV. Their shares are traded on the London, Amsterdam and New York Stock Exchanges using the following ticker symbols: London: REL; Amsterdam: REN; New York: RUK and ENL.