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Is That Mom on the Phone? Teen Drivers and Distraction



Noelle LaVoie, PhD, Parallel Consulting
Yi-Ching Lee, PhD, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
James Parker, MA, Parallel Consulting

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Agenda

- Background: teen drivers and cell phones
– what do we know?
- Method: interviews and surveys with teen drivers
- Results

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- Distracted driving is a leading cause of crashes among all drivers
 - 10% fatal crashes: 12% involved cell phones
 - 17% injury crashes
- Among teens it's even higher
 - 11% fatal crashes: 21% involved cell phones

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GOAL: Reduce cell phone use while driving – especially among teens

- Using a cell phone while driving is one of the most dangerous things a teen driver can do
- Need to understand **how often, why & who** to design better interventions

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How Often?

- Pew (2009)
 - 43% 16-17yrs talk on cell phone while driving
 - 26% 16-17yrs send texts while driving
- Liberty Mutual/SADD (2013)
 - 86% 11th & 12th graders use a cell phone while driving

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Why?

- Teens report that parents use cell phones while driving – parents are role models
- Teens believe that “everyone is doing it” – see it as a social norm

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Who?

- Who are teens talking to on their phones
- Examined as part of a study about how teens learn to drive

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Method

- Interviews with 13 teens
- Survey designed based on interview results
- Survey with 395 teens

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Interview Participants

- Interviewed 13 teens with learner's permits (n=4), restricted (n=4) and unrestricted licenses (n=5)
 - 15-17 years old
 - California

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Interview Topics

- Teens were asked about typical driving hazards including talking on a cell phone while driving and texting while driving
- Teens were asked to describe a recent drive where they talked or texted on their phone

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Interview Results: Use a cell phone while driving

License	Talk	Text	Do not use a cell phone
Learner's Permit (4)	0%	0%	100%
Restricted (5)	80%	40%*	20%
Unrestricted (4)	100%	50%*	0%

*Read & send both. 40%-50% additional teens only read.

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Interview Results

Who do you talk to while driving:

License	Parent	Friend
Restricted (4)	100%	20%
Unrestricted (4)	100%	20%

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Interview Results

Who do you text while driving:

License	Parent	Friend
Restricted (2)	100%	100%
Unrestricted (2)	50%	50%

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Survey Participants

- 395 teens from 31 states

License	Age	Participants
Learner's Permit	15-16	130
Restricted	15-17	118
Unrestricted	16-17	77
Unrestricted	18	70

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Survey Questions

- Do you talk on your cell phone while driving?
- Who do you talk to on your cell phone while driving?
- Do you text while driving?
- Who do you text while driving?

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Survey Results: Talk while driving

License	Age	Parent	Friend	Do not use a cell phone
Learner's Permit	15-16	32%	25%	43%
Restricted	15-17	37%	29%	34%
Unrestricted	16-17	31%	40%	29%
Unrestricted*	18	50%	37%	10%

*3% of calls are from work

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Survey Results: Text while driving

License	Age	Parent	Friend	Do not use a cell phone
Learner's Permit	15-16	8%	35%	57%
Restricted	15-17	8%	35%	57%
Unrestricted	16-17	6%	51%	43%
Unrestricted*	18	16%	57%	26%

*1% of calls are from work

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Survey Discussion

- Who do teens talk to on their cell phone when driving? **Parents**
- Teens in interviews said parents expect to be able to reach them, parents get mad if they don't answer their phone, and they have to tell parents where they are

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Survey Discussion

- Who do teens text with while driving? Mostly friends, but parents are contributing to this problem too

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- Parents have a direct role in teen distracted driving
 - Not just as role models – but engaging in cell phone calls while teen is driving
- Need to focus on communicating with parents that this is not safe, not “normal”
- “Are you driving? Ok – call me back” or “Pull over so we can talk”

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- Teens should be given language for talking to parents about this behavior
- There are other options
 - Technologies to alert caller that teen is driving
 - “I’m driving – I’ll pull over and call you back”
 - “I can’t answer when I’m driving, but I’ll call as soon as I stop”

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Conclusion

- Parents have a direct role in teen distracted driving – more than half of teen cell phone calls while driving are with parents
- Raise awareness among parents and increase direct messaging to parents
- Provide teens with tools for communicating with parents

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Noelle LaVoie, PhD

President

Parallel Consulting

www.parallel-consulting.com

lavoie@parallel-consulting.com

(707) 347-9416