



# Young road users are at particular risk: What needs to be done to save them?

2nd UN Global Road Safety Week Stakeholders'  
Forum, Geneva, 25 April 2007

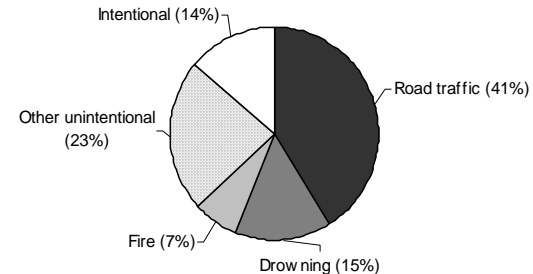
John WHITE

Former Head, Joint OECD / ECMT Transport Research Centre,  
Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, Paris

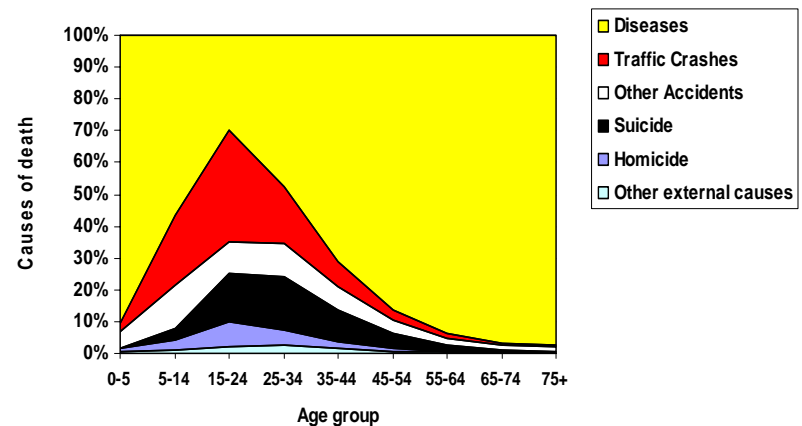
# Young road users: at risk on the road

- Road traffic - the leading cause of death for *children* (0-14 years old), in the OECD countries surveyed; see *Keeping Children Safe in Traffic* (OECD, 2004)
- Traffic crashes - the leading cause of accidental death for *young people* (15-24 years old), in OECD and ECMT countries
- *Young drivers* are most at risk  
*Young Drivers – the Road to Safety* (OECD, 2006)

Children's fatalities - road traffic 41%

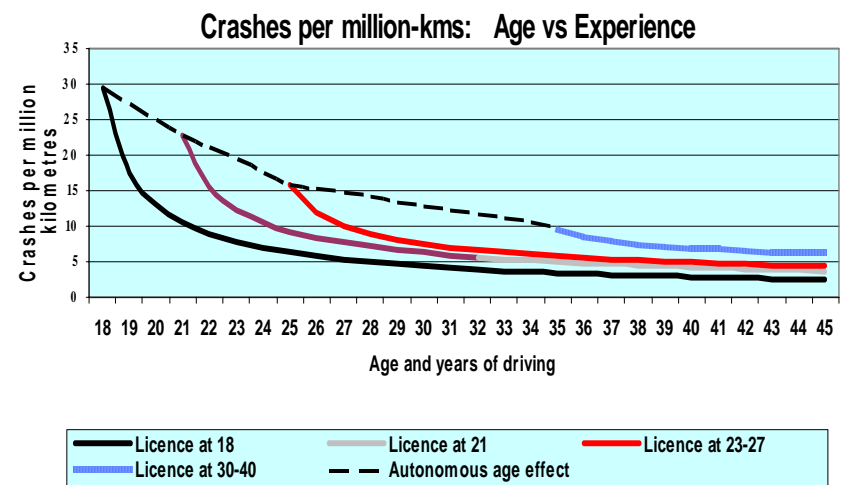
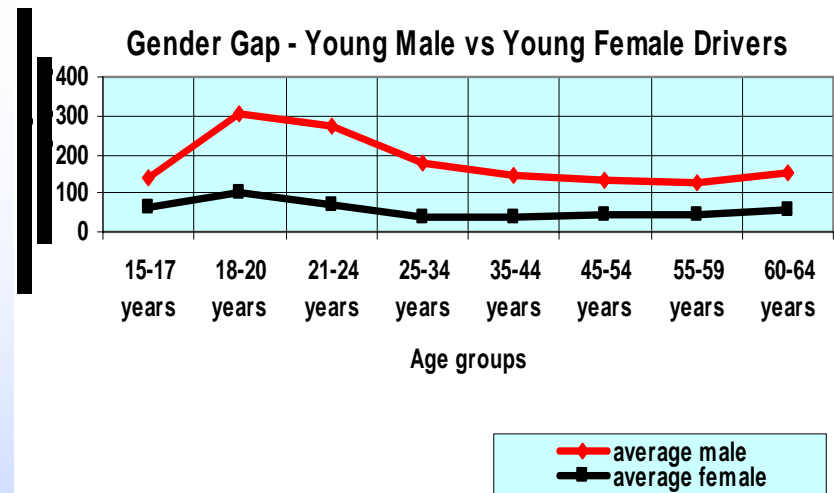


Leading Causes of Death - by age group



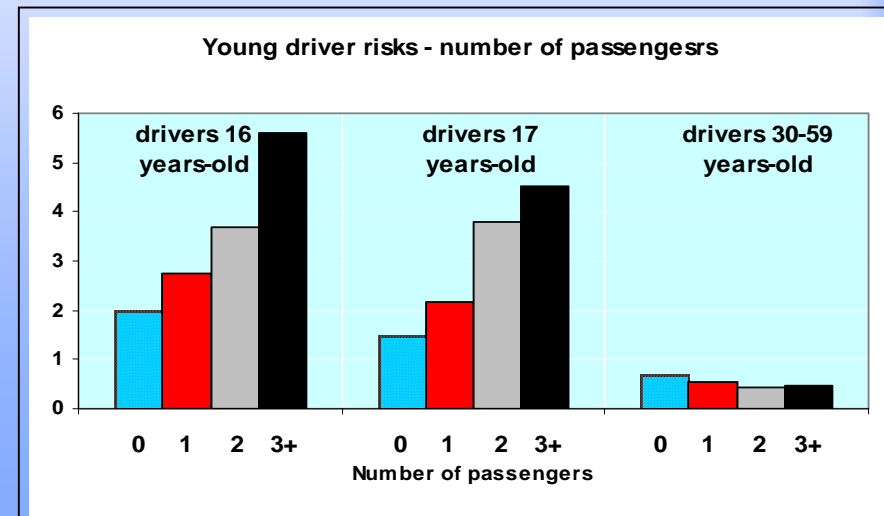
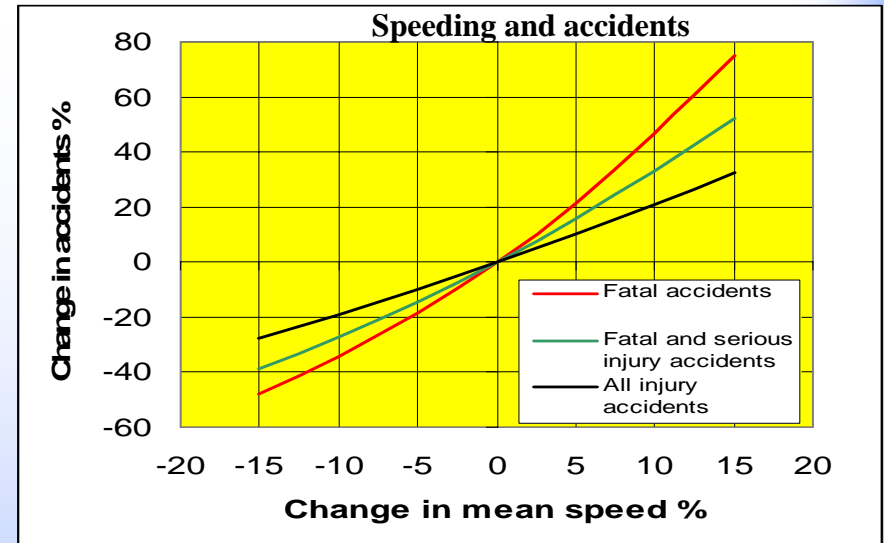
# Young drivers: key risk factors

- Most young drivers are *not intentionally unsafe* drivers
- Rather, young drivers have to deal with the combined effects on the road of their *inexperience, age and gender*
- These key risk factors can override good intentions
  - they contribute to greatly increased fatality rates for young drivers as a group



# Young drivers: high risk circumstances

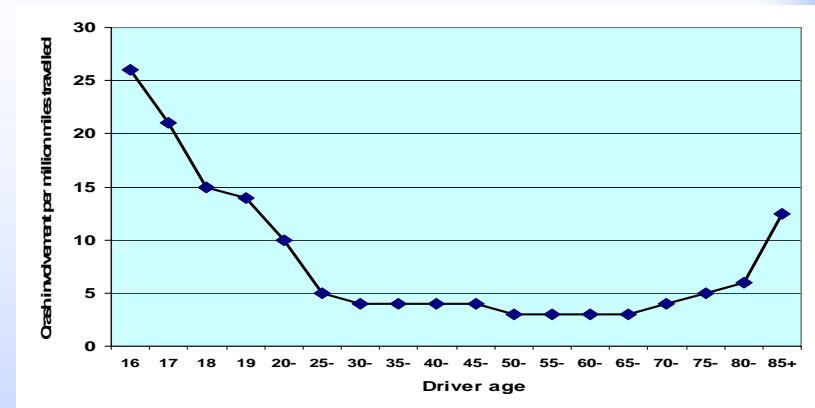
- **Young driver** crashes and fatalities occur most often in circumstances where their underlying risks are multiplied many times
- High risk circumstances reflect general road user problems eg:
  - *speeding, alcohol and/or drugs, no seat belts*as well as some more young driver-specific ones:
  - *night-time and weekend driving, passengers (especially. peer-age), distraction (mobile phones), fatigue (single vehicle)*



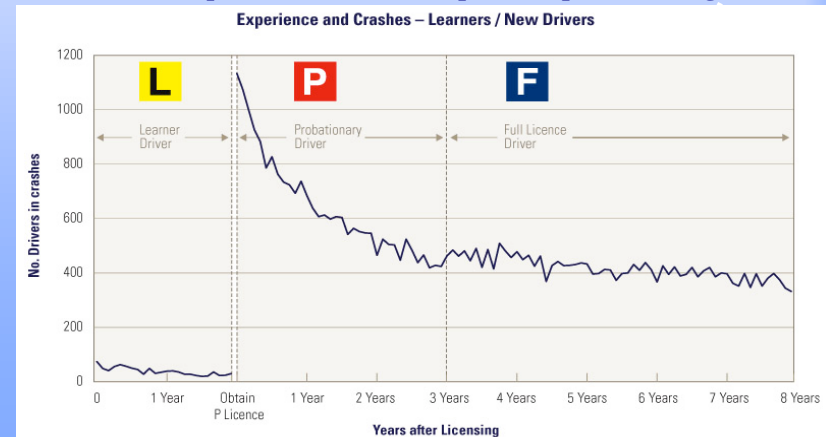
# Young driver strategies/interventions

- Young drivers face highest risk levels in first **6-12 months** after licensing
  - takes **3 years or more** for young driver risk exposure to match older driver levels
- Interventions have focussed on training, campaigns & enforcement
  - + **post-licence protections** to reduce exposure to high risk conditions
- Given concerns about low driving experience before licensing – often only 25 hours - interventions are now also targeting **increasing experience before licensing**
  - accompanied learner (“L”) periods safest time to gain on-road experience
  - risks may be many times lower than after licensing for solo driving

US: Driver crash involvement per million miles travelled  
By driver age, 2001-02 [Source: US IIHS]



Australia (Vic): Experience and Crashes pre- and post-licensing



# Young driver strategies—which actions to take?

Research and experience in developed countries provides support for interventions focussed on:

- ***Increased accompanied driving practice before licensing*** - at least *50 hrs* practice recommendable now *before solo driving* – with long term target of up to *120 hours*
- ***'Safer driver' incentives*** - eg *new technology, insurance rebates, rewards, campaigns* which can all encourage young driver responsibility
- ***Protection of young drivers by post-licensing conditions*** - needed to reduce exposure to high driving risks after licensing - eg *zero BAC, restrictions on peer-age passenger numbers and/or night time driving (on weekends)*
- ***Sustained, visible road safety enforcement*** - *targeting speeding, alcohol, drugs & seat-belt wearing in particular - and supported by special demerit point systems for probationary drivers*

Many countries have been active in these areas.



# Young children: reducing risks and fatalities

## ***Best-performing countries***

- *Safe transport systems - good transport infrastructure and safer vehicles.*
- Child-related measures focussed on:
  - *speed reduction, secondary safety measures; and publicity and campaigns aimed at children, their parents and drivers.*

## ***Legislation***

- Legislation as an indication of *political will*. Key areas include:
  - child safety restraints and seat belts, bicycle helmet use, driver responsibility in a crash involving children, compulsory safety education.

## ***Possible Actions include***

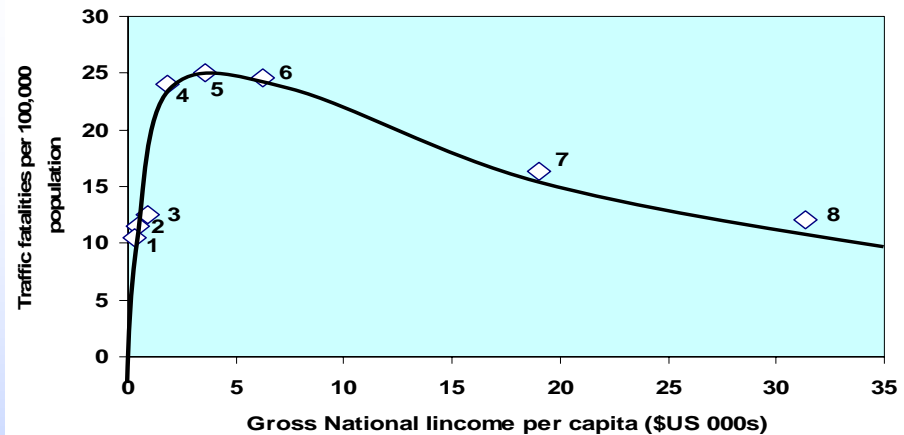
- Greater priority to traffic calming and facilities for walking and bicycling
- Shifting focus of responsibility for child road safety more towards drivers
- Road environments that recognise children's capabilities as well as limitations
- Compulsory use of seat belts + high levels of seat belt use in front/rear seats
- To prevent head and brain injuries, recommended that bicyclists be strongly encouraged to use bicycle helmets



# Young road users - in developing countries

- **Developing countries** – rapidly growing motorisation, with motorcycle/ vehicle ownership and use increasing in line with per capita income levels
  - and road fatalities also rising rapidly
  - levels of road fatalities around 25 per 100,000 population are not uncommon in countries with lower road safety performance
- **Note: OECD developed countries** have taken 30 years of effort to reduce their fatalities to levels shown in graphic
- Young road user and other fatalities could grow to epidemic proportions – and then take another 30 years to reduce - unless effective action is taken now
- Governments, stakeholders and families will need to do everything possible to protect **young road users in particular**
  - who otherwise could make up 25 % of greatly increased numbers of people killed on the roads globally.

Traffic fatalities per 100,000 population vs income per capita



1	Vietnam, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, Nepal, Mongolia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Yemen, Afghanistan, Sub-Sahara, Central-South, East African countries
2	CIS-countries, Ivory Coast, Congo, Cameroon, Lesotho, Senegal, Zimbabwe, Guinea, Indonesia, Pakistan, India, Haiti, Nicaragua,
3	Egypt, Morocco, Syria, Swaziland, Cape Verde, Eq. Guinea, Albania, Bosnia/Herzegovina, Paraguay, Ecuador, Bolivia, Honduras, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Sri Lanka, Philippines, China, Papua, New Guinea, Ocean Islands
4	Belarus, Cuba, Jamaica, Dominican Rep. Colombia, Peru, El Salvador, Europe, Russian Fed., Tunisia, Iraq, Jordan, Iran, Algeria, Namibia, Oceania Islands
5	Poland, Slovakia, Estonia, Libya, Lebanon, Taiwan, Malaysia, Venezuela, Costa Rica, Brazil, Panama, Turkey, Gabon, South Africa, Mauritius
6	Rep. Korea, Saudi-Arabia, Oman, Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, Mexico, Central-East European countries
7	South European countries, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Israel, Arab Emirates
8	USA, Japan, North-West and Central-West European countries, Hong Kong, Singapore, Brunei

Source: Koornstra 2003, p.7, WBCSD 2004



# Further information

UN Global Road Safety Week and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Stakeholders Forum provide key opportunities to focus on the evidence and the needs for improved road safety for young road users (including young drivers).

Current OECD road safety research reports provide more complete details:

- *Keeping Children Safe in Traffic* (OECD, 2005). Summary JTRC web site at: <http://www.cemt.org/pub/summaries/04ChildrenSafe.pdf>
- *Young Drivers – the Road to Safety* report (OECD, 2006). Summary at: <http://www.cemt.org/JTRC/WorkingGroups/YoungDrivers/YoungDriversSummary.pdf>
- *Speed Management* (OECD, 2006). Summary available at: <http://www.cemt.org/JTRC/WorkingGroups/SpeedManagement/SpeedSummary.pdf>
- *Achieving Ambitious Road Safety Targets* (OECD, forthcoming 2007). For Country Reports on Road Safety Performance in 38 OECD/ ECMT member countries: <http://www.cemt.org/JTRC/WorkingGroups/RoadSafety/performance.htm>

For further information, my personal contact: [auswhite@online.fr](mailto:auswhite@online.fr)



# OECD road safety research

