

Study focuses on new mums' sleepiness and injury risk on the road

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New mothers throughout Australia are needed to help QUT sleep researchers investigate whether the disrupted sleep experienced by mothers when caring for their new baby raises the risk of injury while driving.

Janelle Mackenzie, from QUT's Centre for Accident Research & Road

Safety - Queensland (CARRS-Q), conducted a preliminary investigation in the area and found some mums admitted postpartum [sleepiness](#) had led to simple mistakes when behind the wheel, resulting in safety concerns on the road.

"New mums reported inattention and difficulty concentrating while driving," Ms Mackenzie said.

"The study found on average, [mothers](#) reported that sleepiness affected their ability to get through their daily tasks a few days a week."

Ms Mackenzie said the study highlighted a need to better understand how sleepiness affected mums in the first six months following birth, especially given the results indicated postpartum sleepiness was not just a problem immediately after birth.

"This initial investigation was a longitudinal study where we assessed new mums at six weeks, 12 weeks, 18 weeks and 24 weeks post-birth and we found that [sleep](#) disruption affected many mums at all stages," she said.

"We know that every mother's experience is unique and highly dependent on their baby.

"But we believe there are a few things contributing to mothers' sleep and sleepiness in this period and we want to find out why some mothers feel most sleepy immediately after the birth of their child, while others find it more difficult to cope when their baby is older."

To delve deeper into the impact of sleepiness on [new mothers](#), Ms Mackenzie is embarking on an online study and is looking for new [mums](#) who have given birth in the past six months.

Participants will be asked to complete an online questionnaire asking about sleep, sleepiness and driving since their baby was born.

To take part visit survey.qut.edu.au/f/176291/6471/

Provided by Queensland University of Technology

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