

Intervention appears to help teen drivers get more, better practice

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A web-based program for teen drivers appears to improve driving performance and quality supervised practice time before teens are licensed.

During the learner phase of driver education, most states have requirements for supervisors and practice content. However, parent supervisors can vary in their interest, ability and approach to driving supervision. Inexperience is a contributing factor in car crashes involving novice drivers.

The authors conducted a clinical trial to examine whether the Teen Driving Plan (TDP) for parent supervisors and prelicensed [teen drivers](#) would result in more supervised driving in a range of environments and more teens capable of passing an on-road assessment. The TDP focuses on driving environments such as empty parking lots, suburban residential streets, one- and two-lane roads, highways, rural roads with curves and elevation changes, and commercial districts. The study involved 217 pairs of parents and teenagers with a learner's permit who either took part in the TDP intervention or received the Pennsylvania driver's manual (the control group). Teens received as much as \$100 and parents as much as \$80 for completing all study activities.

Intervention participants reported more practice in all but one of the six driving environments and at night and in bad weather compared with the control group. Overall, 5 of 86 teens (6 percent) in the intervention had their on-road driving assessment ended because of poor performance

compared with 10 of 65 teens (15 percent) in the [control group](#).

"This study demonstrates that supervised practice can be increased using an evidence-based behavioral intervention We estimate that for every 11 teenagers who use TDP, one additional teenager would be prevented from failing the tODA [Teen On-road Driving Assessment] for safety reasons." Jessica H. Mirman, Ph.D., of The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, and colleagues wrote in their *JAMA Pediatrics* paper.

In a related editorial, Corinne Peek-Asa, Ph.D., of the University of Iowa, Iowa City, and colleagues write: "Road traffic crashes, among the top 10 leading causes of death worldwide, are increasingly recognized as a public health priority."

"Research on innovative new methods for intervention delivery are needed, such as options for financial incentives through insurance programs, approaches for early identification and targeting of high-risk drivers, and programs that introduce a safe [driving](#) culture in early childhood. . . . Aiming to fill the gap in evidence-based parent-focused interventions, Mirman and colleagues evaluated the Teen Driving Plan (TDP) in this issue of *JAMA Pediatrics*," they continue.

"As the evidence base grows, translation and cost-effectiveness studies that examine the impact of crash risk in real-world settings are needed," they conclude.

More information: *JAMA Pediatr.* Published online June 23, 2014. [DOI: 10.1001/jamapediatrics.2014.252](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapediatrics.2014.252)
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