

Later school start times significantly reduce teen driving accidents

April 9 2019



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A new study to be presented at CHEST Congress 2019 Thailand in

Bangkok shows a significant decrease in teen driving accidents when school start is delayed. Researchers from Farwaniya Hospital in Kuwait and Boston Children's Hospital studied the impact of a 50-minute delay in high school start times in one of the largest school districts in the U.S.

The study compared data from two different academic years: 2014-15, which served as a baseline, and 2015-16, after the delayed start was implemented. Students, who were between the ages of 16-18, self-reported [school](#)-night sleep duration. The Fairfax (Virginia) County Youth Survey was used to determine the average sleep duration and driving under the influence of alcohol. The Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles provided de-identified data on driving [accidents](#) in both academic years.

There was a 5.25% decrease in the [crash rate](#) among teen drivers between the two academic years. This significant reduction was also seen in distraction-related accidents (8.7%) and alcohol-related accidents (20%). During this same time period, there was an increase in teen accident rates by 3.5% in the rest of the state of Virginia.

"Interventions in reducing sleep loss in young drivers such as delaying school start times may significantly reduce needless injuries and deaths due to drowsy driving," says Dr. Saadoun Bin-Hasan, lead researcher.

Further results from this study will be shared at CHEST Congress 2019 in Bangkok on Thursday, April 11, at 4:15 p.m. in the Exhibition Hall. The study abstract can be viewed on the [journal CHEST website](#).

More information: S. Bin-Hasan et al, SCHOOL START TIME CHANGE, SLEEP DURATION, AND DRIVING ACCIDENTS IN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, *Chest* (2019). [DOI: 10.1016/j.chest.2019.02.294](#)

Provided by American College of Chest Physicians

Citation: Later school start times significantly reduce teen driving accidents (2019, April 9)
retrieved 8 May 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2019-04-school-significantly-teen-accidents.html>

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