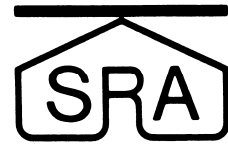


News

Society for
Risk Analysis



For Immediate Release

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KIDS OF RISK-TAKING DRIVERS OFTEN FOLLOW PARENTS' HABITS, *RISK ANALYSIS* STUDY SHOWS

McLean, Va. (June 24, 2008) – If you are a risk-taking driver, there is a good chance your children will be risk-taking drivers too – at least when they first get behind the wheel, according to a new study appearing in the scientific journal *Risk Analysis*.

Young men especially pick up from their fathers “a virile way of driving that includes the taking of calculated risks,” the authors from the French National Institute for Transport Safety and Research report in “Is the Way Young People Drive a Reflection of the Way Their Parents Drive? An Econometric Study of the Relation Between Parental Risk and Their Children’s Risk.”

The study, which appears in the June 2008 issue (Vol. 28, No. 3) of the peer-reviewed journal, confirms findings from prior U.S. studies that when it comes to driving, children of both sexes follow their parents’ lead. The earlier studies found positive correlations between parents’ educational styles on the way their children behave at the wheel, and on driving offenses committed by a group of young men and their fathers¹. *Risk Analysis* is published by the McLean-based Society for Risk Analysis (www.sra.org).

Agénor Lahatt and Marie-Clémence LePape of the institute’s Group for the Analysis of Road Risk and its Governance examined results from a French national survey² of more than 1,200 drivers between 18 and 25 who recently passed their tests and nearly 900 parents, to understand the transmission of risky driving behaviors within families. Risky practices considered included driving after excessive drinking, speeding, using a cell phone without a hands-free kit, driving with more passengers than the vehicle is designed to carry, driving for extended periods without a break, and racing with other drivers.

Lahatt and LePape focused on how children are influenced by their parents and, in particular, by their parents’ beliefs. Here are other highlights of their findings:

(more)

¹ Citations listed in the study.

² The MARC (Mobility, Attitude, Risk, Behavior) survey is a multidisciplinary survey through which sociologists, psychologists and statisticians worked together to seek to establish the causes of risk taking on the road by young people.

- “The more involved parents are, the greater their influence,” but that “[p]arental influence decreases as the young person constructs his or her own representations of risk, and own identity as a driver.”
- “With regard to practices in particular, it seems that sons are only influenced by their fathers, whereas daughters are influenced by both parents.”
- Young men see women drivers as being “overcautious and hesitant.”
- Not surprisingly, young people whose parents respect highway codes tend to have more respect for those laws themselves.

(Note to editors: The complete study is available upon request from Joseph L. Walker, SRA communications advisor, 703-491-3301 or walkercom2@aol.com; contact Walker to interview lead author Agénor Lahatt.)

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