

Teen Driver Education



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Contributions from the Behavioral and Social Sciences in Reducing and
Preventing Teen Motor Vehicle Crashes
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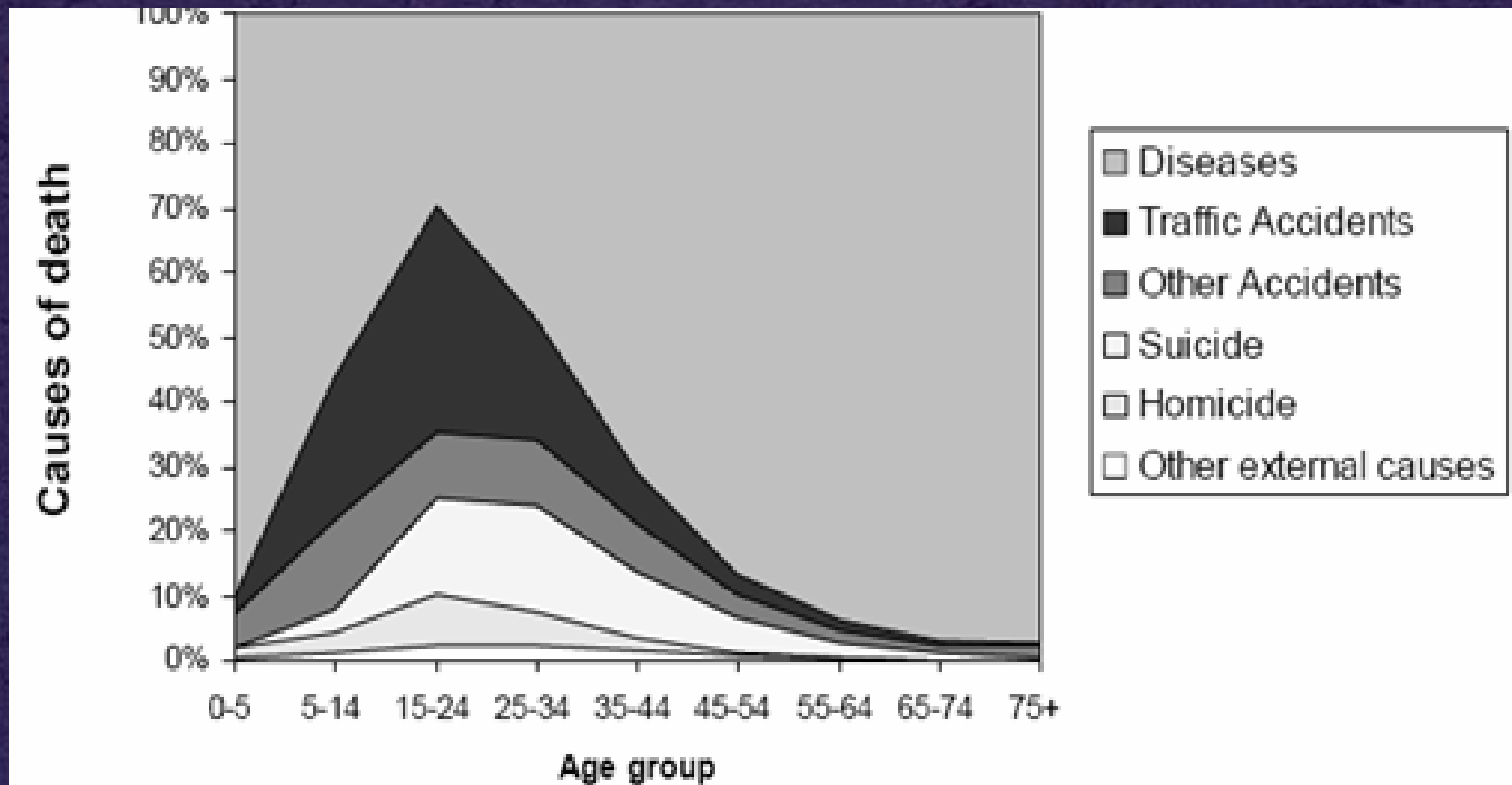
The Problem

§ **Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for 15 to 20-year-olds.**

§ Driver fatalities for 15 to 20-year-olds increased by 5% between 1994 and 2004.

§ Driver fatalities rose by 1% for young males, and by 15% for young females between 1994 and 2004.

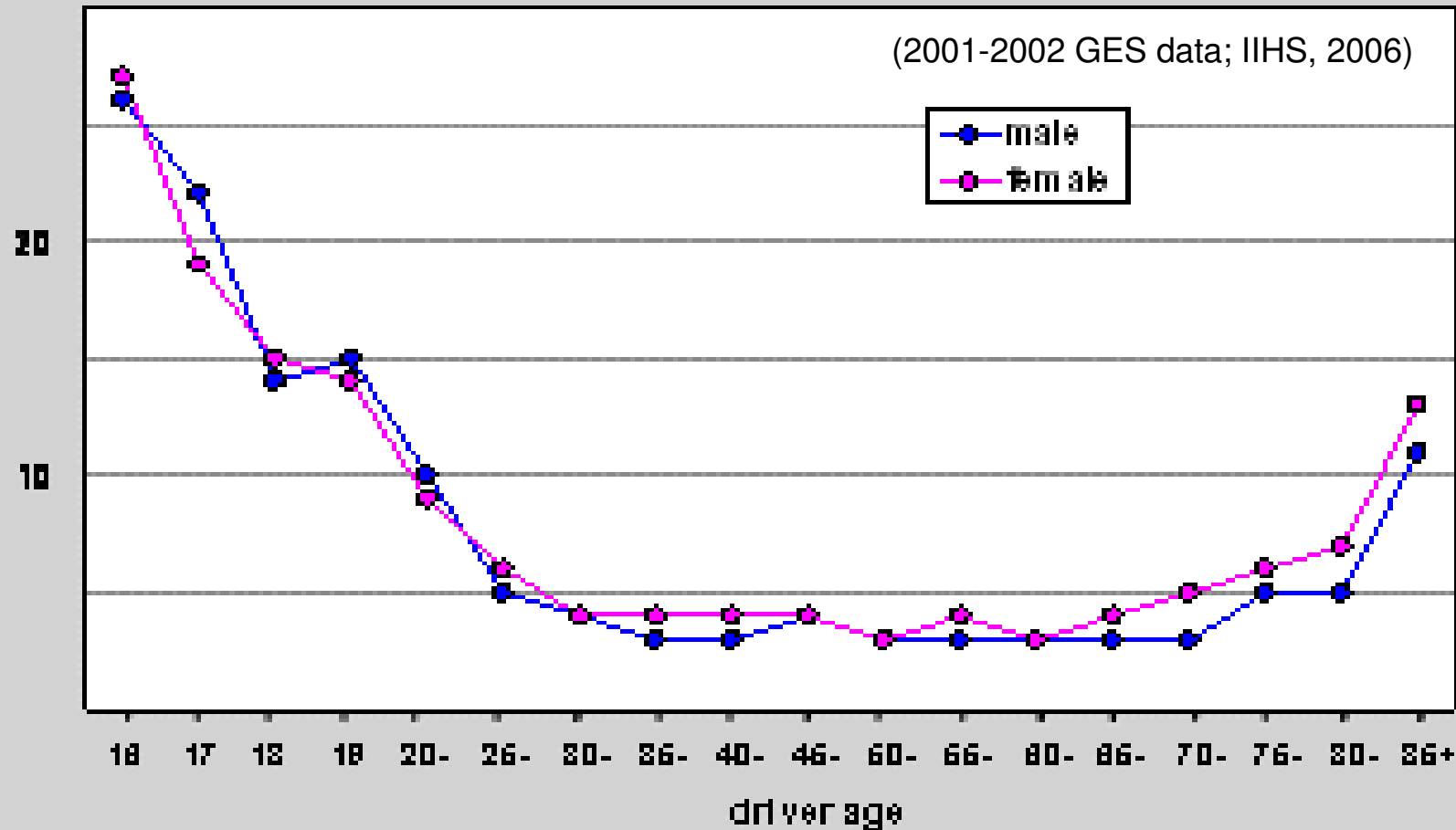
Crashes are teens' most common cause of death (data from 23 OECD countries)



Source: OECD/ECMT Working Group on Young Driver Risks and Effective Countermeasures (April, 2006). Young driver Risks and Effective Countermeasures (draft report).

Crashes per Million Miles, by Driver Age

YOUNG DRIVER CRASH RISKS: Crashes per million miles, by driver age, 2001-02



Driver Education

Goals for Driver Education:

- § Rules of the road
- § Basic car control skills
- § Safe driving skills
 - § Expectation that driver education could produce safer drivers with fewer crashes and violations

Typical Driver Education Requirements

§ 30 hours of classroom instruction

§ Theory

§ Rules of the road

§ Safe/defensive driving

§ Risk assessment

§ 6-10 hours in-vehicle training (car control)

History of Driver Education

§ Early Days (1930—1940)

§ First formal driver education courses developed

§ Growth in Driver Education (1940-1980)

§ Period of rapid growth in enrollment in driver education courses

§ 1947 – 200,000 students (3,000 public schools)

§ 1964 – 1,300,000 students (12,000 public schools)

§ 1976 – 3,200,000 students (17,000 public schools)

History of Driver Education

§ Period of Contraction (1980+)

§ The number of students taking driver education and the number of public schools offering driver education started to decline sometime in the mid to late 1970's

§ Questions raised about the effectiveness of driver education

§ Issue of early licensure

§ Budget pressures

§ In 1981, based on the available evidence, NHTSA dropped driver education from its list of priority programs

§ As a result federal funding for driver education was significantly reduced

Overview of Research on Driver Education

- Early research on the effectiveness of driver education (1940 – 1960)
 - Generally positive indicating it resulted in safer drivers
- Challenges to the effectiveness of driver education (1960 – 1980)
 - Series of reports and studies casting doubt on effectiveness of driver education
 - Numerous methodological issues raised about prior studies
 - Self selection bias
 - Differences in personality and demographic characteristics between those who take and do not take driver education
 - Matching techniques are inadequate to control for bias

Overview of Research on Driver Education

- Studies showing driver education leads to earlier licensure of young persons and thus to increased exposure to crashes at an earlier age
- Call for a true experimental study of driver education involving random assignment

Overview of Research on Driver Education

§ Evaluation of the Safe Performance Curriculum – “DeKalb Study” (1983)

§ Major R&D program implemented by NHTSA to develop and evaluate a state-of-the-art driver education

§ Resulted in a large scale random assignment study

§ Results did not support the view that driver education produces safer drivers

Overview of Research on Driver Education

- Other more recent studies
 - § United States
 - § Canada
 - § Europe
 - § Australia, New Zealand, and Tasmania

Effectiveness of Driver Education

What has the Research shown?

- Preparing novice drivers for licensing
 - Rules of the road
 - Basic car control skills
 - More skillful under observation

Generally accepted

- Producing safer drivers
 - Fewer crashes and violations

Little consistent convincing evidence that traditional driver education leads to safer drivers

The Future of Driver Education

§ **Numerous suggestions have been made on how to improve driver education**

§ Two stage approach integrated with GDL

§ Need to teach safety skills students are not motivated to learn

§ Need to address risk taking and overconfidence

§ Greater parental involvement

Current NHTSA Activities Related to Driver Education

§ **NHTSA has supported the development of a model driver education curriculum with ADTSEA**

§ Includes teacher standards

§ Used by some states

§ NHTSA is assessing how some states are using this curriculum

Current NHTSA Activities Related to Driver Education

§ Review of Driver Education in the United States

- § Content and curriculum
- § Public versus private
- § Instructor training and certification

§ Feasibility Study

- § Examining issues associated with evaluating driver education
 - § Design issues
 - § Outcome measures
 - § Sample sizes

Current NHTSA Activities Related to Driver Education

§ National Transportation Safety Board Recommendations (2005)

§ Review current driver education and training programs in use nationally and internationally and determine which instructional tools, training methods, and curricula are consistent with what the U.S. Department of Education has identified as best teaching methods that are likely to lead to reductions in crashes. Further, incorporate these best practices into a model driver education and training curriculum.

Current NHTSA Activities Related to Driver Education

§ National Transportation Safety Board Recommendations (2005)

§ Determine the optimum sequencing, in conjunction with graduated driver licensing schemes, for educating teenagers on safe driving skills, both in the classroom and behind the wheel, and encourage the States to adopt this requirement.

Joint Review with DOE

§ Document current knowledge of:

§ Instructional tools

§ Training methods

§ Curricula

§ Identify promising approaches

§ Convene expert panel

§ Driver education sequencing

§ Driver education combined with GDL

NHTSA GDL Projects

§ GDL Projects

- § Overall GDL Evaluations (Oregon, Michigan, Georgia, and Nationally)
- § Safety Belt Restrictions (Wisconsin and Tennessee)
- § Passenger Restrictions (across several States)

NHTSA Driver Education Projects

- § **Parent-taught driver education (Texas)**
- § **Risk awareness training**
- § **Advanced driver training**

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