# Drink driving behaviour and alcohol-related disorders: Their antecedents and contribution to driver's licence restriction, suspension and loss

## Researchers

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## Summary

This project examines the relationship between a range of family-related influences, alcohol use, and drink-driving behaviour in young adulthood.

Research suggests that young drivers do not drive under the influence of alcohol more frequently than older drivers, but when they do, they are at higher risk of being involved in a car crash even with low or moderate blood alcohol levels. The evidence suggests that young adults with an alcohol abuse or dependency problem are more likely to engage in a range of risky driving behaviours which put not only themselves, but also other road users, at risk of injury or death.

## Outcomes

This study found significant associations between a lifetime diagnosis of alcohol abuse and a range of self-reported driving offences as well as significant associations between a lifetime diagnosis of alcohol dependence, drug driving, and a range of driving offences. Street racing and other risky behaviours were also strongly associated with alcohol abuse.

Drivers who had undergone a Composite International Diagnostic Interview (CIDI) diagnosis of alcohol abuse had committed substantially more offences such as speeding, driving unsafe cars, and ignoring traffic signals. Those who had ever had a diagnosis of alcohol abuse were much more likely to drive over the limit, to drive after using illegal drugs, tailgate, chase another driver, ignore the speed limits or run red lights.

The data suggested that a diagnosis of alcohol abuse was much more predictive of driving offences than a diagnosis of alcohol dependence.

For a number of offences, including speeding, serious traffic violations, and drink driving, aggressive behaviour at 5 years of age predicted longer term outcomes, but the predictions were not very strong. A similar pattern was evident using 14 year aggression scores to predict driving infringements; although the pattern of association was more apparent for males than for females. Delinquent behaviour at 14 years of age provided strong and consistent predictions of subsequent driving violations.

Generally, measures of the child’s cognitive development (IQ) provided little prediction of that person’s subsequent infringements.

Due to its longitudinal nature, the unique contribution of this large scale, population-based, prospective study was its ability to examine links between driving behaviour and earlier childhood and adolescent characteristics.

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