

March 3, 2016

Undergraduate Research Symposium - Proposal Submission

Title - Observational study of Distracted Driving among Liberty University College Students

Program of Study – Health Education and Health Promotion

Presentation Type – Choose one of the following: PowerPoint

Mentor(s) and Mentor Email - Dr. Pamela Mukaire (pemukaire@liberty.edu)

Student name(s) and email(s) –

HLTH 453 Class Spring 2016 (The entire class of HLTH 453 section 1 and section 2 worked on this project)

Presenters

- Jardim Thais (mjhaag@liberty.edu)
- Fiseha, Jonatan (jlfiseha@liberty.edu)
- Fischer, Madison (mafischer@liberty.edu)

Category – Choose one of the following: Experimental (Applied)

Extended Abstract

Background: Texting while driving has proven to be a significant, global issue amongst the teenage demographic. Statistics from the National Safety Council showed teens as four times more likely than adults to get in crash events directly related to cell phone use.¹ The Texting and Driving Safety Campaign stated that 13% of drivers aged 18-20 admitted to texting or talking on their phones during their crash; 34% claim to have texted while driving, while 52% claim to have talked on the phone.¹ According to the U.S. Department of Transportation National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, drivers aged 18-20 have the highest rate of crash or near-crash incidence at 23%.² At least half of the drivers surveyed strongly believe that phone use has no effect on their driving.² In the state of Virginia, 21% of teen drivers involved in fatal accidents were distracted by their cell phones.³ Teen drivers in Virginia are also four times more likely than adults to get into crashes when talking or texting on a cell phone.³ The goal of this undergraduate class pilot project was to observe and describe vehicle drivers at busy intersections on a college campus.

Methods: In this cross sectional 25 minute observational study, health promotion and education undergraduate students obtained vehicle observations on their college campus, including driver's characteristics and behaviors, and vehicle and passengers characteristics. Data collection times ranged from 1:20pm to 4:20 p.m., during daylight hours on a school week day. The data from the

observation forms were collected manually and entered and analyzed in SPSS statistical software.

Results: Data was obtained on 135 vehicle observations from 8 sites on a college campus, with observations per site ranging from 6 to 25 vehicles. Observer-rated information coded 79.3% (107) of driver's age between 16 - 25 years and 20.0% between 25 -69 years; and 54.1% (73) of drivers were female, and 45.9% (62) male; 83% (112) were Caucasian. A total of 56 passengers was observed, 6 of whom were under the age of 8. Observations revealed 19 manipulating of a hand-held device, 18 drivers holding a phone to the ear, and 1 talking on a Bluetooth. Other observations included 3 drivers eating, and 2 drinking; 41 correctly using their seatbelts, 8 not wearing their seatbelts at all, and unknown seatbelt use for 112 drivers.

Conclusions: In total, 28.1% (38) of all observed drivers displayed distracted driving due to device use. This assessment is part of an ongoing intervention development designed to increase college students' knowledge of the dangers of texting and driving.

References

1. Texting and Driving Safety. *Texting and Distracted Driving Infographic*. 2012. Accessed January 30, 2016
2. Distracted Driving Research Statistics, 2016. Accessed January 30, 2016.
3. Texting and Driving Statistics - Distracted Driving Drives Up Risk.edgarsnyder.com. Accessed February 2, 2016.

Christian Worldview

As Christians we hold to the value that every life is important and precious in the sight of God. It has come to our attention that young drivers are risking their lives by frequently texting and driving. Many young drivers are unaware of the dangers of texting while driving or believe they are not susceptible to these dangers. It is our desire to raise awareness of the dangers and demonstrate that abiding by the rules is important. We desire to help them understand that their actions not only affect them but the people around them as well.

Our biblical worldview influences how we view others on the road and also impacts our behavior behind the wheel. We are instructed by the Bible to listen and obey the laws that are instituted by authority. In Titus 3:1 it says, "Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work." Proverbs 16:16 says, "How much better to get wisdom than gold! To get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver." If we were to go against the laws, we would be deliberately disobeying God.

The Bible also instructs us to be mindful of others and put others before ourselves. By texting and driving, we are removing our attention from the road and putting others at risk. By texting and driving we are putting both others and ourselves in danger in a selfish and irresponsible

manner. Texting and driving can lead to debilitating injuries and death. In Romans 13:10, we are told that “love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law.”

As Christians we should be valuing the lives of others. As health educators we are equipping the population with valuable information and wisdom. Texting and driving is a changeable behavior that can save the lives of many while also allowing for a more responsible lifestyle. Every person has value and has a reason to live, and Christian health professionals must do anything to protect the valuable lives of the people around us.

As researchers, we care about those who are on the roadways. One of the ways we can do this is through observational studies. Observing other driver’s behaviors on the road allows us to emphasize the prevalence of the problem of texting and driving and will enable us to prevent the behavior in the future through developing safe driving health education program. Our observational findings are also designed to be as honest and realistic as possible, in accordance to the Christian values of integrity and truth. We should always be honest in our data collection and reports, in order to keep our status truthful. Proverbs 28:18 says, “Whoever walks in integrity will be delivered, but he who is crooked in his ways will suddenly fall.” It is really important as Christians to influence others by giving them correct information.