



Younger perspectives: Road accidents

Table of Contents

Introduction	Page 3
How risky? how common?	Page 3
The biggest, baddest problem of them all	Page 5
Is age a factor?	Page 5
Why 17-25	Page 6
2011's increase of accidents	Page 7
Combating the Issue	Page 8
Conclusion	Page 9

Younger perspectives: Road safety

Introduction

A research project, looking to delve into the teenage mind. How they think road accidents are caused, who they think is most involved in them and how they would combat them?

About the Author

So my name is Rahima Khanom, I'm currently 16 years old and in my last week of year 11. I completed this research project and a presentation whilst I was on a work experience placement at RoSPA in Edgbaston from the 2nd to the 13th of July 2012.

I was first interested in coming to RoSPA for a placement, when a teacher told me a little about them. What hit me was the realisation that I really didn't know much about just how severe and common road accidents are. So many people die by the hand of things as preventable as drink driving, speeding and using a mobile phone whilst driving. The list is endless; Or at least substantially long.

A perspective that is starting to be heard more and more is the youth perspective; In this case 14-19 year olds. So my project was to find out what the younger members of our communities and societies think about the cause of road accidents.

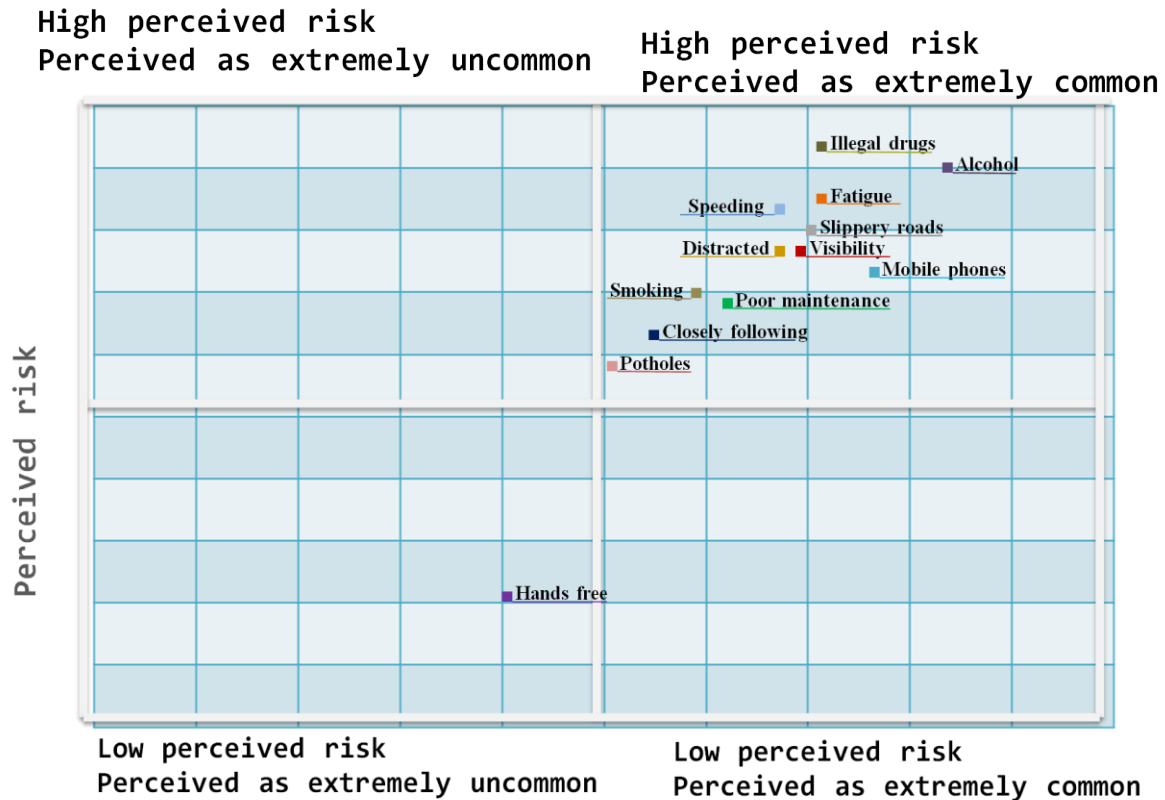
How risky, how common?

To start with, a short questionnaire was devised. It consisted of 7 main questions and 3 minor questions to get an idea of the demographic. Fifteen 14-19 year olds took part in the survey.

The first question asked how much of a risk they considered an issue to be. There were 13 issues listed and the teenagers were asked to rank them on a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being "Not at all risky" and 10 being "Extremely risky".

With an average of 9.07 out of 10, Illegal drugs seems to be considered the most risky, with driving whilst over the alcohol limit coming second with an average of 8.93 out of 10. Using a hands free device was considered the least risky, with an average rating of 2.00 out of 10. It was followed by potholes in the road, considerably higher, with an average rating of 5.79 out of 10.

The second question was set out similarly, this time asking how common they think this issue is as a factor into road accidents. 1 is extremely uncommon and 10 is extremely common. Driving whilst over the alcohol limit moves to the top of the list, perceived as the most common as a factor, with a rating of 8.57 out of 10. Driving whilst 10 miles or more over the speed limit follows closely, with a rating of 8.07 out of 10. The issue seen as most uncommon is again using hands free devices, with a rating of 4.21. Potholes are also seen as an uncommon factor in accidents, with a rating of 5.21 out of 10.



Note: The participants considered 12/13 of the issues to be in the ‘High received risk, Perceived as extremely common’ quadrant. This could possibly due to the sheer amount of media reportings of accidents, mishaps and such, which tend to make to make younger viewers who have grown up with it, quite anxious, or perhaps cautious. This is a possible reason in the case of drink driving, with it being so high in the perceived risk and prevalence, possibly due to its large media coverage.

Issue	How common is this issue as a factor in road accidents for a car driver? (Average rating out of 10)	How much of a risk is this issue in terms of having a road accident as a car driver? (Average rating out of 10)
Using a handheld mobile device	7.87	7.07
Using a hands free device	4.13	2.00
Fatigue/Tiredness	7.27	8.33
Illegal drugs	7.27	9.07
Smoking a cigarette	6.00	6.87
Driving whilst over the alcohol limit	8.53	8.93

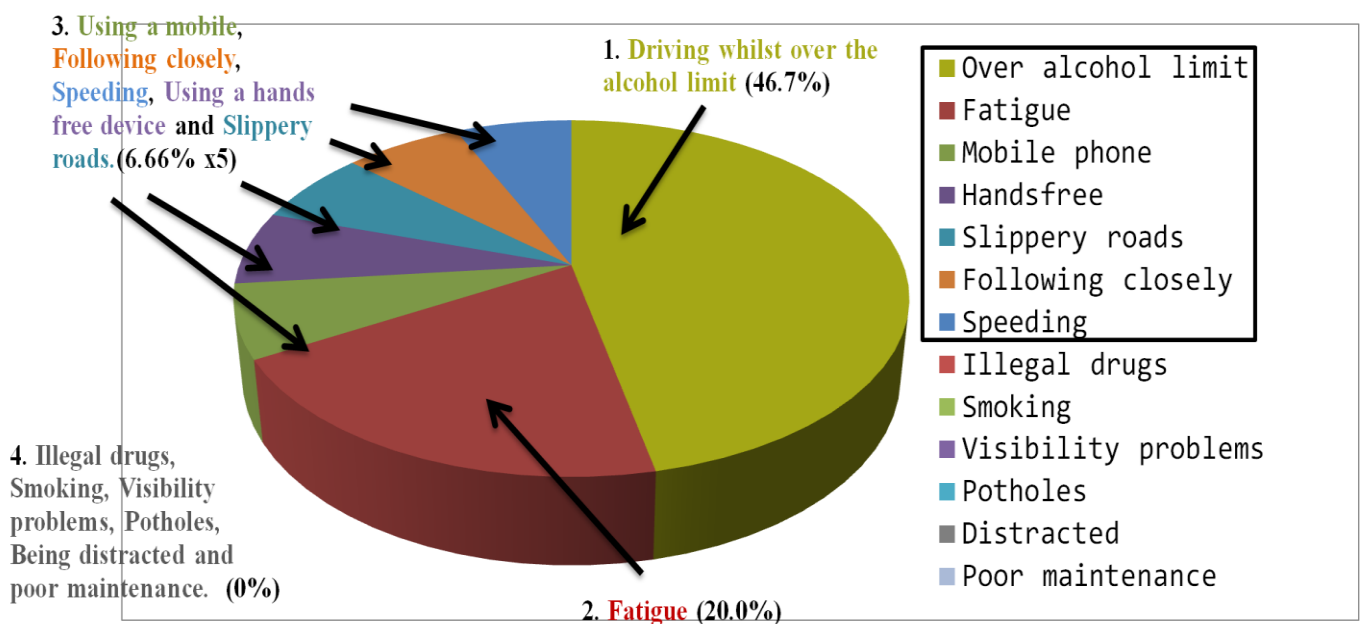
Slippery/Icy roads	7.20	7.93
Weather conditions causing visibility problems	7.00	7.73
Potholes	5.13	5.60
Following other cars too closely	5.67	6.13
Not paying attention to the road	6.93	7.40
Driving 10 or more miles above the speed limit	8.07	7.47
Poor vehicle maintenance	6.33	6.73

What did they consider to be the biggest “problem”?

We then asked them to pick the issue from the last two questions that they considered to be the biggest problem.

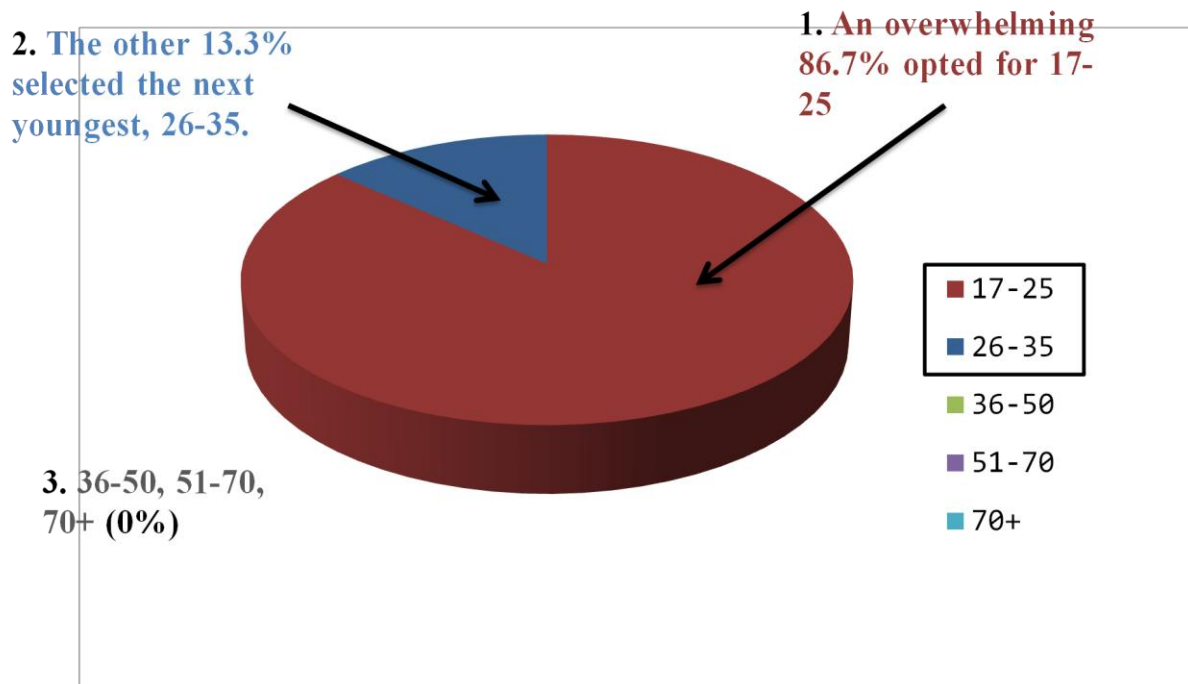
Over 45% of the takers of the survey chose driving whilst over the alcohol limit as the biggest problem. Another 20% chose fatigue as their choice for biggest problem.

Interestingly, no one chose illegal drugs despite it being considered the most risky in the last question.



Is age a factor?








They were then asked which age group they felt was most involved in road accidents. The options were 17-25, 26-35, 36-50, 50-70 and 70+.



The majority, at 86.7%, chose 17-25, the youngest age range. The other 13.3% went with 26-35, the next youngest range. No one opted for 36+.

Why 17-25?

Being 16 years old myself, I did suspect that most would pick the younger drivers, so I then decided to ask why they chose 17-25. I gave them a list of ideas and also allowed an “other” option. No one chose “other”. Most of the participants chose Attitude as one of the reasons for picking 17-25, followed by peer pressure. I found this quite interesting that an age group that is in this age group or very close to it would pick having an attitude problem, which could be from experiences they’ve had with peers or perhaps they have even noticed it with themselves. Which says that they do realise there is a problem with mindset amongst their group, which has potential to be changed.

1. Attitude	
2. Peer pressure (Carrying friends and other passengers)	
3. Driving later at night	
3. Lack of experience	
3. More exposure to drink/illegal drugs	
3. Hazard perception (not being able to identify risks and assess how to avoid it)	
7. All of the above	

For the first time in nearly a decade, road accidents have gone up, why did they think this was?

“The figures for 2011 for Great Britain, published today by the [Department for Transport](#), show that road deaths rose by three per cent from 1,850 in 2010 to 1,901 in 2011.” (RoSPA Press release, 28 June 2012)

Below is the complete list of responses, 1/15 skipped this question:

- *“People are more dependent on technology nowadays. So they feel like they have to check it more often, including on the road.”*
- *“With the country in financial trouble, clubs and pubs are having to sell drinks cheaper than ever to even hope to compete with others. So alcohol is cheaper than ever and with drink driving being a massive problem, this just makes it even worse.”*
- *“People don't care as much about road safety.”*
- *“More drivers driving badly”*
- *“More influence from alcohol and drugs or worse weather”*
- *“Penalties not harsh enough.”*
- *“More young drivers these days”*

- *"More cars on the road than ever, leads to more accidents then ever...other than that I'm not really sure"*
- *"Everyone's drinking too much because 2012 is a huge celebratory year and they're getting too happy. Or, maybe because technology's on the up and more people are using their mobile phones whilst driving. I'm not sure really."*
- *"The number of teenagers who do alcohol and drug abuse has gone up which increases road accidents."*
- *"People's priorities are changing, they are less worried about road accidents."*
- *"Larger number of inexperienced drivers on road, alcohol being very cheap to buy in large amounts leading to drink driving accidents"*
- *"People are stressed because of the economy."*
- *"The change in government. They don't put as much into road safety as the last government."*

Combating the issues:

The last question was on a more positive note, what they'd implement to start to work to reduce the numbers of road accidents. I gave them a list of possible ideas, and asked if they agreed with them. I also added an "other" option. 85.7% agreed that smoking whilst driving should be banned and 71.4% agreed that harsher penalties for using handheld devices should be implemented. Only 14.3% agreed that more 20mph speed limits should be implemented and any activity considered to be distracting should be banned.

		Response Percent	Response Count
Stricter laws banning smoking whilst driving		85.7%	12
Harsher penalties for using handheld devices whilst driving		71.4%	10
Anti-Sleep alarms fitted in cars		64.3%	9
Reducing the drink drive limit (80mg per 100ml of blood at the moment)		64.3%	9
More speed cameras		57.1%	8
Random breathalyzer tests		42.9%	6

Banning hands-free devices whilst driving		21.4%	3
More 20mph speed limits		14.3%	2
Stricter laws banning eating, drinking, changing the cd, or anything that could be considered distracting whilst driving		14.3%	2
None of the above		0.0%	0
Other (please specify)		14.3%	2

Other responses:

"Increasing the driving age."

"More on the spot fines"

To conclude:

There are a few points to be taken away from this survey:

- The 14-19 year old participants consider most issues to be high risk, high prevalence.
- That nearly half of them consider driving whilst over the alcohol limit to be the biggest problem.
- The age group "17-25" is perceived as the most involved in accidents and that attitude is the main problem.
- The main reasons for which they think road accidents have increased involve: more inexperienced drivers, more young drivers, the government and the public's priorities, alcohol being easier to obtain and more drug users.
- Most people agree with banning smoking whilst driving, whilst most don't agree with more 20 mph speed limits and banning any activity considered distracting.