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Profiling the Distracted Driver: Young, Female and Solo

By **Nicholas Bakalar** March 30, 2015 12:46 pm

People younger than 25 are more than four times as likely as older people to use a cellphone while driving, a new study reports, and a driver talking on a phone is about 63 percent more likely to be a woman than a man.

Researchers in Texas estimated driver age and recorded driver and passenger characteristics and cellphone use for 1,280 drivers as they stopped at busy intersections near medical centers in Houston, Dallas, Austin, El Paso, San Antonio and Brownsville. The study, in *Preventive Medicine Reports*, gathered data from 2011 to 2013.

During that time, the percentage of drivers talking on the phone decreased, to 16.4 percent from 20.5 percent. But texting increased, to 8.4 percent from 6.4 percent.

Lone drivers were more than four times as likely to be talking on the phone as drivers carrying passengers, and women were more than twice as likely to be texting as men.

“Areas of high-density car and pedestrian traffic really need to be considered for prohibition,” said the lead author, R. Sue Day, an associate professor of epidemiology at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston School of Public Health. “And it may be helpful to concentrate future interventions on females and younger drivers.”

Texas has no statewide laws prohibiting driving while using a cellphone.

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