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## **Rural roads dangerous for young drivers**

Results from Australia's largest study of young drivers have shown that they are at significant risk of crash on rural roads. According to researchers from The George Institute, young drivers living in rural areas are more likely to be involved in serious crashes than those in urban areas.

These results and other young driver issues will be discussed today at the launch of the Young Driver Factbase – [www.youngdriverfactbase.com](http://www.youngdriverfactbase.com) - a new online resource of young driver issues and research evidence.

Overall, young city drivers are more likely to crash due to the high-density of vehicles within urban settings. However, after conducting a survey of more than 20,000 young drivers, researchers identified young rural drivers to be at a far greater risk of single-vehicle crashes, which are more likely to result in serious injury than other crash types.

"We know that urban crashes with multiple vehicles take place more often due to the high volume cars on city roads. What we didn't know was that young drivers in rural locations are actually at a much higher risk of having single-vehicle crashes, which are often fatal and in many cases avoidable", said author Associate Professor Rebecca Ivers, The George Institute.

"Since our study found that young drivers on rural roads were more likely to crash as a result of curved roads and speeding, efforts to reduce speeding behaviour and manage driving at curved road sections, such as speed cameras, and greater use of engineering measures to slow traffic are needed on rural roads", Associate Professor Ivers added. The research was conducted by Huei-Yang Chen, PhD student in the Sydney School of Public Health, the University of Sydney.

These results are part of a series of analyses from the DRIVE study, which is the largest survey of young drivers undertaken, both in Australia and internationally.

The DRIVE study was funded by Australia's National Health and Medical Research Council, NRMA Motoring and Services, and NRMA-ACT Road Safety trust and the Roads and Traffic Authority of NSW. The DRIVE study recruited over 20,822 young drivers holding red P-plates in NSW aged 17-24 years and followed all 20,822 young drivers for police-recorded crashes occurring over 2 years. The overall aim of the study is to investigate the risk factors in motor vehicle-related crashes and injuries among young drivers and to find ways to improve the safety of young drivers and help make roads safer for all users.

This particular analysis investigated the risk of various type of crash, by urban, regional and rural settings.

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These results will be discussed from 9.30am Tuesday 22 September 2009 at the launch of the Young Driver Factbase – an online resource of all the issues facing young drivers, which presents the best research evidence. Interviews available from 11.30am.

For further information and to arrange interviews, please contact:

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The George Institute is a world renowned health and medical research institute, focused on the prevention and management of chronic disease and injury. The George conducts high-impact research across a broad health landscape and is a respected voice among global policy makers. The George has conducted major global applied research projects and innovative community-based programs from bases in Australia, China and India. In 2009, the Institute celebrates a decade of discovery, innovation and impact. [www.thegeorgeinstitute.org](http://www.thegeorgeinstitute.org)

The Young Driver Factbase is an online resource, containing up-to-date information on young driver safety and provides recommendations based on the best available research evidence. Visit [www.youngdriverfactbase.com](http://www.youngdriverfactbase.com) to see an overview of all the issues facing young drivers and the latest evidence investigating these factors such as high powered vehicles, driver distraction and restrictions.

Already the DRIVE study has released findings on the risky driving behaviours that young drivers undertake, putting them at an increased risk of crashing.

