

Study: Age, sex affect traffic accidents

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Understanding the differences among U.S. drivers of different sexes and various ages is critical to preventing serious injuries, researchers said.

Purdue University engineering researchers showed statistical differences in traffic accident injuries depend upon the gender and age of drivers, the university said.

Researchers found significant differences in the severity of injuries sustained in accidents involving men and women and drivers within three age groups: young, 16-24; middle-aged, 25-64; and older, 65 and above.

Among the findings, foregoing seat belts increased the likelihood of injury by 119 percent for young women, 164 percent for middle-aged women and 187 percent for older women.

Fatalities were more likely for middle-aged men who fall asleep at the wheel, speed, had an accident at an intersection or after midnight Friday or Saturday, researchers said. The same factors had no significant effect on the injury levels for middle-aged women.

"Because the factors that affect how severely you are going to be injured vary depending on your age and gender, a better understanding of age and gender differences can lead to improvements in vehicle and highway design to minimize driver injury severity," lead researcher Fred Mannering said.

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