

Abstract

# Use of Mobile Phone During Driving and the Risk of Collision Among Preparatory Year Students in King Saud University, Riyadh, 2014

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## Abstract

**Background:** Mobile use while driving is a major cause of road traffic injuries.

**Objective:** To determine the rate of mobile use while driving among King Saud University students, their perception of the risks and its contribution to collisions.

**Methods:** A cross-sectional study was conducted in May 2014 targeting 986 male students of King Saud University. A questionnaire was used to obtain data on possessing a driving license, years of driving, driving hours, and collision or near collision in the six months preceding the study. Eight statements were used to assess the behavior and perceptions related to the use of mobile phones while driving. Data were analyzed using the chi-square statistic, odds ratio (OR) and the 95% confidence interval (95% CI).

**Results:** Half the participants (45.3%) have a driving experience of 4-6 years and 18.3% of them did not have a driving license. Collision in the preceding six months was reported by 44.6% of participants and 37.9% of them attributed their occurrence to mobile phones. Variable proportions reported always texting (53.3%) or talking in hand-held (66.2%) or hand-free (26.1%) phones while driving. A significantly higher risk of collision was observed among participants who reported always talking on mobile phones while driving as hand-held (OR 1.435) and hand-free (OR 1.469) as well as sending or receiving text messages (OR 1.885). The risk increased significantly from 2.052 among participants who reported driving daily for 1-2 hours to 3.165 among those who reported driving for more than 6 hours.

**Conclusions:** The risk of collision exists with the use of hand-held and hands-free mobile phones. As hands-free mobile phones are not safer, national legislation should consider their restriction during driving and implementation of the legislations that ensure safety on the road should be reinforced. The objective assessment of the contribution of mobile phones to road traffic injuries is recommended.

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