

## THE PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS AND AGGRESSIVE DRIVING: AGE AND GENDER DIFFERENCES IN VOLUNTARY RISK-TAKING BEHAVIOR IN ROAD TRAFFIC CRASHES

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**Aim:** To examine the effect of age, gender and psychological distress on driver behaviour and accident involvement and also to examine the differences in driving skills, driver behaviour and performance and its effects on Road Traffic Crashes [RTCs] in Qatar.

**Methods:** This is a cross-sectional and representative of 1824 drivers participated in this survey using socio-demographic information, Driver Behaviour Questionnaire (DBQ), and Driver Skill Inventory(DSI).

**Results:** Mean age was 36.5 years for males, and 36.8 for females ( $p = 0.013$ ). There was a significant difference between males and females regarding education level ( $p = 0.013$ ). Significantly higher proportion of males (62% vs. 57%;  $p = 0.035$ ) having 4WD. More than half of females were using mobile phones during driving (51% vs. 39%;  $p < 0.001$ ). Higher proportion of males reported usually excessive speeding as compare females (39% vs. 28%;  $p < 0.001$ ). Mean scores of males were significantly higher on the violations regarding driving close to the front car pushing the driver to speed or get out of way ( $p = 0.012$ ), disregarding red traffic signals ( $p = 0.011$ ), disregarding speed limits at night ( $p < 0.001$ ) and on the motorway ( $p < 0.001$ ). Overall, males were significantly higher skilled as compared to females (mean score 40.6 vs. 38.7;  $p = 0.001$ ). Significantly higher proportion of females involved in head on collision.

**Conclusion:** Age, gender and use of seat belt, and talking on mobile were main predictors for motor crashes and injuries. The challenge for public health is to modify risk-taking behaviour in young males and females drivers to reduce dangerous driving practices.