What can we learn from the crashes of learner riders?

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Presentation to 2013 International Motorcycle Safety Conference, Orlando, October 2013
Outline

• Safety of inexperienced riders
• Rider licensing in Queensland
• Characteristics of learner riders
• Crash involvement and severity
• Comparing the crashes of learners and other riders
• Implications for licensing and training
• Conclusions
Safety of inexperienced riders

• Learner stage is much safer than the provisional stage for car drivers, but not for motorcyclists
• Queensland 2006 – more than 16% of riders in fatal crashes held a licence less than a year
• Injury crashes in New South Wales 2011
Background to the research

• Analysis of motorcycle crash and licensing data to inform future improvements in licensing and training in Queensland, Australia
• Focus on potential for pre-learner training to improve the safety of learner riders
Rider licensing in Queensland

- Two mcyc licence classes
  - R
  - RE (<660ml and 150kW/tonne)
- Three types of licence
  - Learner, Provisional, Open
- Hold car licence for one year and five-item road rules test to obtain RE learner licence
Rider training and assessment in Queensland

• Two options to obtain RE licence
  – Q-Ride
    • no minimum duration on L
    • competency-based training and assessment by accredited private providers
  – Q-SAFE
    • 6 months minimum duration on L
    • test-only by Govt examiner

• Hold RE licence for one year before can apply for R licence
Characteristics of learner riders

- Obtained learner licence Jan 2006-July 2009
- Average age 33 years
- 75% male
- Half held learner licence less than 27 days
- More than 90% licensed via Q-Ride
Crash involvement and severity

- 5.7% of mcyc crashes involved learners
- 7.4% involved provisional licence holders
- Learner rider crashes more severe than open or provisional
- 70% of learners “at fault” vs 62% provisional vs 56% open
- 35% of learners in crashes aged 17-20, 23% aged 21-24
Comparing the crashes of learners and other riders

- Younger (<25) and older (25+) learners
- More crashes in lower speed zones
- Younger riders (learner or open) had
  - more crashes at night
  - more MV crashes
- Larger contribution of inexperience, inattention, alcohol or drugs and drink riding
Implications for licensing and training

• Many learner riders are a lot older than learner drivers
  – miss out on GLS because of age exemptions
  – training may require different content and pedagogy

• Younger learners need more focus on risk taking and risk management

• Consequences of short time learner licence held
  – fewer crashes
  – licence training is really learner training
  – limited opportunity for pre-learner training
Conclusions

• Learner rider safety is influenced by factors common to all riders; to all novice riders and those specific to licensing requirements for learners

• Lack of robust evaluations to underpin recommendations for change

• Pre-learner programs part of system of restrictions, education and assessment

• Pre-learner programs may underpin appropriate skills and behaviour management strategies for entire riding career
Acknowledgements

• This research was funded by the Motor Accident Insurance Commission of Queensland.
• It was managed by the Queensland Department of Transport (later the Department of Transport and Main Roads - TMR)
• Reports can be downloaded from http://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/Safety/Motorcycle-safety/Motorcycle-safety-initiatives.aspx#carrsq
Questions?

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