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**Reducing Young Drivers' Crash Risk: Are We There Yet?
An Ecological Systems-Based Review of the Last Decade of Research**

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1 **Highlights:**

- 2 • We review the last decade of research on young drivers' crash risk
- 3 • Individual, social, and environmental risk/protective factors are discussed
- 4 • An ecological framework is proposed to understand synergies between factors
- 5 • Positive learning and social experiences can reduce young drivers' risk
- 6 • Future interventions should consider young drivers in the contexts of their
- 7 development

1 **1. Introduction**

2 Although reductions in young novice drivers' crash rates have been reported in the
3 literature, for example in the U.S. (Ferguson, Teoh, & McCartt, 2007), this demographic
4 group continues to be over-represented in car crashes and road fatalities worldwide,
5 especially if male (Al-Aamri, Padmadas, Zhang, & Al-Maniri, 2017; T. Brown, George,
6 Rickwood, & Frost, 2016; Curry, Pfeiffer, Durbin, & Elliott, 2015; Elvik, 2010; S. E. Lee,
7 Simons-Morton, Klauer, Ouimet, & Dingus, 2011; Sheridan, Howell, Mckeown, & Bedford,
8 2011; Shope & Bingham, 2008; Spoerri, Egger, & Von Elm, 2011; Toroyan & Peden, 2007).
9 Extensive literature has demonstrated that multiple internal and external factors contribute to
10 crash risk for young novice drivers, and a number of contributions have attempted to
11 synthesise intervening factors (L. J. Bates, Davey, Watson, King, & Armstrong, 2014; Shope
12 & Bingham, 2008). However, many studies have focused on specific determinants of crash
13 risk or prevention rather than exploring synergies between factors, which reflects the
14 difficulty of addressing such a multifaceted topic. Using a more holistic approach, recent
15 publications have adapted ecological perspectives to consider the complex interaction of risk
16 and protective factors associated with crashes or injuries (Buckley, Chapman, & Sheehan,
17 2014; Scott-Parker, Goode, & Salmon, 2015; Scott-Parker, Goode, Salmon, & Senserrick,
18 2016). Ecological systems theory was first developed by Bronfenbrenner (1979) and
19 maintains that human development depends on the synergistic interplay of different systems
20 of individual and socio-environmental influences across different systems: 1) the individual
21 and their cognitions, attitudes, and personalities; 2) the micro-system of proximal social and
22 environmental influences; 3) the macro-system of the cultural and geographical context.

23 Applying ecological systems theory to young drivers' crash risk is useful for a
24 number of reasons. Firstly, it enables to categorise factors of development based on how
25 immediate and direct their impact on the development is (i.e., it distinguishes proximal and
26 distal factors). Secondly, it stimulates to investigate interconnections between factors:
27 Individual circumstances (e.g., experience or attitudes) can affect young drivers' performance
28 in different social or environmental circumstances, but on the other hand, social and
29 environmental factors (e.g., parents, training, or a safe car and road environment) can
30 moderate the effect of individual characteristics on crash risk. Furthermore, applying
31 ecological systems theory to young drivers has the advantage of taking into account
32 developmental circumstances that may influence their risk (Johnson & Jones, 2011).
33 Teenagers and young adults experience considerable physical, mental, and social changes

1 that, together with inexperience behind the wheel, can impact negatively on driving
2 performance (Glendon, 2011; Scott-Parker, 2017). Parts of the brain that are crucial to safe
3 driving, particularly the prefrontal cortex which is involved in attention and decision-making,
4 may not be fully developed up to the age of 25, limiting a young motorist's ability to deal
5 with complex road situations (Glendon, 2011; Romer, Lee, McDonald, & Winston, 2014;
6 Underwood, 2007). Furthermore, brain and emotional development can limit the level of
7 psychosocial maturation and behavioural control displayed by young individuals, making
8 them more prone to unsafe driving behaviours which exacerbate the risk of road crashes.
9 Speeding, drink-driving, distracted driving, not wearing seat belts, and aggressive driving
10 have been indicated as the most common causes of road crashes in young adulthood (Begg,
11 Brookland, & Connor, 2017; Bingham, 2014; Russo, Kay, Savolainen, & Gates, 2014;
12 Sarma, Carey, Kervick, & Bimpeh, 2013; Scott-Parker, Watson, King, & Hyde, 2014a;
13 Weiss, Kaplan, & Prato, 2014; Zhang & Chan, 2016). Because developmental processes can
14 affect driving performance and behaviour, comparing young novice and experienced
15 motorists can help to identify determinants of risk that specifically apply to young novice
16 drivers. However, the development that young adults are undergoing is also more positively
17 associated with mental fluidity, enabling them to improve their driving performance and
18 behaviours if exposed to positive learning and social experiences (Glendon, 2011; Keating &
19 Halpern-Felsher, 2008). Thus, identifying programmes and interventions that have been
20 effective in reducing young drivers' risk across the individual, social, and environmental
21 domains is useful to clarify which factors best enhance the learning process. Ecological
22 perspectives have been proposed in relation to young peoples' risk of injury (Johnson &
23 Jones, 2011) and in terms of specific driving-related issues such as distractibility (Buckley et
24 al., 2014). However, to our knowledge, there are no overviews of recent research on young
25 drivers' crash risk that adopt ecological systems theory. By adopting Bronfenbrenner's
26 model, and building upon previously developed frameworks (L. J. Bates et al., 2014; Buckley
27 et al., 2014; Scott-Parker, Goode, et al., 2015; Shope & Bingham, 2008), the present review
28 provides an overview of the past ten years of evidence on factors of young novice drivers'
29 crash risk as well as, crucially, the links between factors. The key unique contribution of
30 adopting an ecological systems approach is that the many levels of factors, as well as the
31 interactions between factors, can be more clearly understood and examined. There is a wealth
32 of research on young driver crash risk, making it difficult to clearly visualise and structure the
33 many intervening factors, for both researchers in the field and those who may be new to the
34 area (e.g., policy makers, insurance providers). The ecological systems model has proven

1 useful for understanding development and we feel it is well placed to aid our understanding
2 of young driver crash risk.

3 The aim of this review is to: 1) Identify the most important indicators of crash risk in
4 young novice drivers as compared to experienced drivers, considering individual, social, and
5 environmental circumstances; 2) Highlight the most effective preventive factors for young
6 drivers; 3) Note gaps in current knowledge that will need to be addressed in future research.

7

8 **2. Search Method**

9 The review aimed to synthesise the evidence on risk and protective factors of young
10 drivers' crashes published after a previous contribution (Shope & Bingham, 2008) that
11 provided a comprehensive account intervening factors. For this reason, our search focused on
12 papers published between 2007 and 2017, and for which the full-text was available in English
13 language. The search included empirical studies (qualitative and quantitative), systematic
14 reviews, meta-analyses, doctoral dissertations, and government or police records on crashes.
15 Searches were conducted on PubMed and PsycInfo. Search words included ("young driver"
16 OR "novice driver") AND ("risky driving" OR "crash*" OR "accident*") AND ("age" OR
17 "experience*") present in the title or abstract. Specific driving-related journals
18 (Transportation Research Part F: Psychology and Behaviour; Accident Analysis and
19 Prevention; Traffic Injury Prevention) were also hand-searched for the period 2007-2017.
20 Google scholar was hand searched for government or police records. The search took place
21 between June and November 2017. A total of 370 abstracts were screened by both authors for
22 inclusion, with 98 titles being removed as duplicates. After full-text inspection, a further 76
23 papers were excluded because they did not compare drivers based on age and/or experience
24 or did not describe an intervention. A total of 196 papers were deemed eligible for inclusion
25 in the review.

26

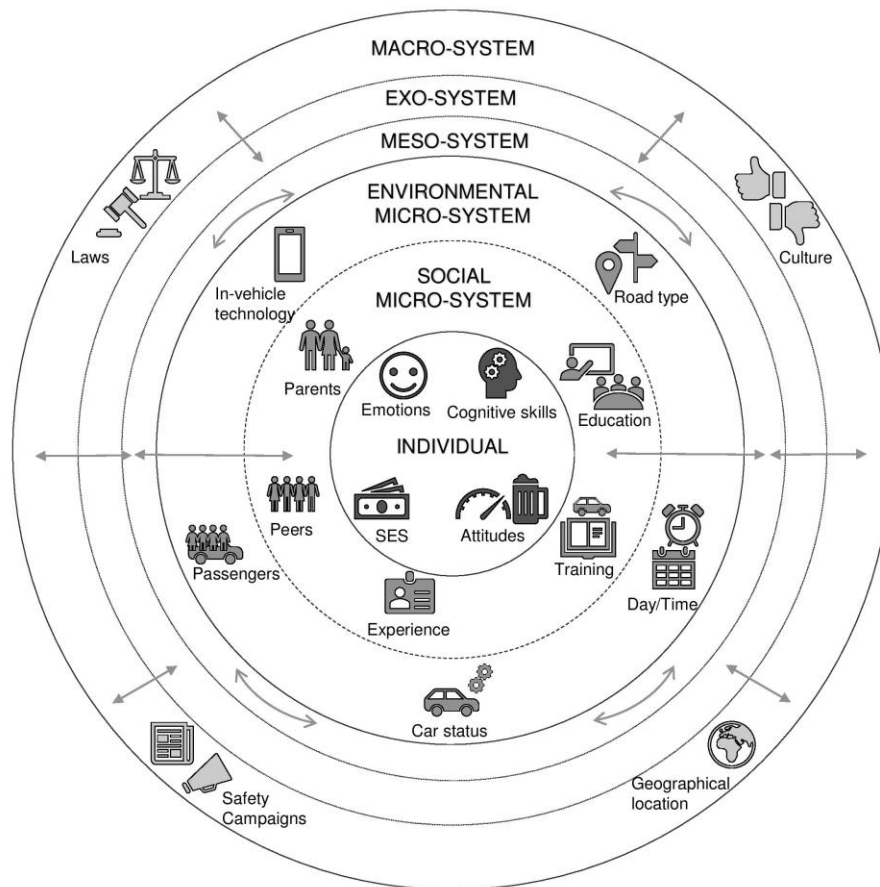
27 **3. Framework**

28 In the following sections, factors that contribute to increase or reduce young drivers'
29 crash risk are described under the following categories: individual characteristics, social
30 influences (parents and peers, training), car and road environmental circumstances, and the
31 broader socio-cultural and geographical context. Such categorisation is based on frameworks
32 of factors of young drivers' crash risk previously proposed in the literature (L. J. Bates et al.,
33 2014; Shope & Bingham, 2008), and structured to be in line with ecological systems theory

1 (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), as shown in Figure 1. We begin with the individual domain (the
2 central circle in the figure) by considering driving-related cognitive skills, attitudes,
3 personality characteristics, emotions, and socioeconomic circumstances that can increase or
4 decrease young novice drivers' risk. Secondly, we discuss the micro-system of proximal
5 social factors (parents, peers, driving experience, training, and interventions) and
6 environmental influences (car and road environment) that can moderate individual
7 characteristics and affect young drivers' risk most immediately and directly. We then
8 synthesise the available evidence on the broad socio-cultural context (macro-system)
9 including cultural attitudes, law enforcements, and safety campaigns, that can have a more
10 indirect (i.e., "distal") influence on young drivers' risk.

11 In the Discussion (section 8), we highlight how an ecological perspective is useful to
12 clarify links between factors across different systems, at the level of the meso-and exo-system
13 (see Figure 1). The meso-system includes interconnections between individual and micro-
14 level social and environmental factors, and in the case of driving refers, for instance, to the
15 influence that parents can have on the effects of young drivers' training, or to the distracting
16 effects of peer passengers on certain roads and at certain times of the day. The exo-system is
17 instead the level where proximal and distal factors influence each other: for example, law
18 enforcements can limit dangerous in-car circumstances, but on the other hand social groups
19 can influence a young driver's attitudes towards road rules. We argue that identifying such
20 links and applying them to existing interventions is key to reducing young drivers' risk.
21 Lastly, we note changes in the knowledge about young drivers' risk occurred in the past ten
22 years, and we suggest directions for future research on the topic.

1



2

3

Figure 1: Framework of individual, social, and environmental factors intervening in young novice drivers' risk using an ecological systems model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

4

Arrows indicate links between factors within and between systems.

5

6

7

4. Individual Factors

4.1 Driving-Related Cognitive skills

Skills such as visual search, hazard perception, inhibition of distractions, and decision-making, which are related to executive function, are crucial to effectively control a vehicle and pay attention to what is happening on the road. The incomplete development of brain areas involved in these skills up to the age of 25, together with lack of experience behind the wheel, make young individuals who use a car for the first time less effective drivers than older experienced motorists (Glendon, 2011). For instance, a study in which participants aged 17 to 30 years old completed an attentional task while in a driving simulator found that selective attention improved with age and was significantly associated with a decreased risk of collisions (McManus, Cox, Vance, & Stavrinou, 2015). Another study found lower cognitive impulsiveness, higher sensitivity to situational hazard-related cues, and more situation-congruent actions in an experienced than a young novice group of drivers (Xu, Li, & Jiang, 2014). Controlling for both age and experience in drivers aged 18-22 years old, a study using neuroimaging in a simulated driving environment showed that prefrontal cortex activity associated with inhibitory control (i.e., the ability to manage mental workload) was higher in older (21-22 years old) than younger drivers (18-19 years old) only in the experienced group (with more than 10,000 miles driven), whereas the novice group (less than 5,000 miles driven) performed worse overall, and no age-related differences emerged (Foy, Runham, & Chapman, 2016).

These age- or experience- related differences in executive functions have an important role in determining young novice drivers' crash risk because they can negatively impact hazard perception as well as susceptibility to distractors. This has been demonstrated by a considerable number of studies showing that novice drivers tend to scan the road more narrowly than experienced drivers (Alberti, Shahar, & Crundall, 2014; Chan, Pradhan, Pollatsek, Knodler, & Fisher, 2010; Konstantopoulos, Chapman, & Crundall, 2010; Underwood, 2007), and are less effective in anticipating, detecting, or responding to hazards (Borowsky & Oron-Gilad, 2013; Chan et al., 2010; Crundall, 2016; Imtiaz & Stanley, 2015; Jackson, Chapman, & Crundall, 2009; S. Lee et al., 2008; Nugter, 2017; Parmet, Borowsky, Yona, & Oron-Gilad, 2014; Smith, Horswill, Chambers, & Wetton, 2009; Ventsislavova et al., 2016), especially if the hazards are not clearly visible (Crundall et al., 2012; Madigan, 2013). Hazard perception is such a crucial ability to driving that in some regions it is routinely tested as part of the licensing process (e.g., Queensland, Australia; U.K.), and a

1 recent study on over 5,800 young novice drivers found that those who failed a hazard
2 perception test as learners were 25% more at risk of being involved in a road crash in the
3 following year (Horswill, Hill, & Wetton, 2015).

4 Individual differences in the association between executive functions and young
5 drivers' performance have been noted based on personality and attitudes, with studies
6 reporting for example that young drivers with high working memory capacity can display
7 higher sensation seeking and as a consequence higher engagement in risky driving behaviours
8 (Walshe, Ward McIntosh, Romer, & Winston, 2017). Nonetheless, the available evidence
9 indicates that younger drivers tend to experience deficiencies in driving-related cognitive
10 skills which may impair driving performance. Notably, these skills are the individual factors
11 most amenable to improvements through experience and training, as it will be outlined in the
12 subsequent section 5.1 "Experience, Training and Interventions".

13

14 **4.2 Personal Characteristics**

15 Incomplete brain maturation and inexperience can cause young novice drivers to
16 overestimate their driving skills more than experienced drivers (De Craen, Twisk,
17 Hagenzieker, Elffers, & Brookhuis, 2011; Mynttinen et al., 2009), with a negative impact on
18 the ability to adapt one's driving performance to changing road circumstances (de Craen,
19 Twisk, Hagenzieker, Elffers, & Brookhuis, 2008; de Craen, Twisk, Hagenzieker, Helffers, &
20 Brookhuis, 2007). On the other hand, young inexperienced motorists tend to underestimate
21 the perceived risks associated with driving, for example in relation to using a mobile phone
22 while on the road (Cazzulino, Burke, Muller, Arbogast, & Upperman, 2014). In a study
23 where young (aged 18-34) and older adults (aged 55-82) used the phone during a simulated
24 drive, both age groups' performance decreased significantly, however, young participants
25 were significantly less aware than experienced participants of the magnitude of the negative
26 impact of the secondary task on driving, especially if male (Horrey, Lesch, & Garabet, 2008).
27 This combination of overestimating skills while simultaneously underestimating risk is an
28 important contributor to young drivers' engagement in risky behaviours (Sarma et al., 2013).
29 Interestingly, despite having higher risk perception is associated with lower engagement in
30 risky driving in young drivers (Mirman, Albert, Jacobsohn, & Winston, 2012), that might not
31 necessarily be sufficient to deter young drivers from engaging in unsafe driving (Atchley,
32 Atwood, & Boulton, 2011). Self-perceptions such as high self-efficacy for driving and multi-
33 tasking, as well as high perceived behavioural control, can in fact lead to higher engagement

1 in risky or distracted driving in young drivers in spite of risk perceptions (Gupta, Burns, &
2 Boyd, 2016; Hill et al., 2015).

3 Perceptions also interact with personality traits to influence driving attitudes and
4 behaviours (Harbeck & Glendon, 2013; Machin & Sankey, 2008; Mirman et al., 2012). For
5 example, an Australian study with drivers aged under 25 found that participants with low
6 sensation seeking and high risk perceptions showed lower rates of drink-driving and driving
7 while fatigued, together with higher use of seat belts; however moderating effects of risk
8 perceptions did not emerge for participants high in sensation seeking (Hatfield, Fernandes, &
9 Job, 2014). In a recent review of the literature, Scott-Parker and colleagues (2017) reported a
10 positive association between rewards sensitivity and risky driving behaviour across 11
11 international papers, and noticed an age-related trend in rewards sensitivity, peaking in
12 adolescence and decreasing with older age, as suggested by Steinberg (2010). Some studies
13 have noticed differential correlations between personality characteristics and risky driving
14 behaviours based on drivers' age and experience (Bachoo, Bhagwanjee, & Govender, 2013;
15 T. G. Brown et al., 2017; Cestac, Paran, & Delhomme, 2011; Constantinou, Panayiotou,
16 Konstantinou, Loutsiou-Ladd, & Kapardis, 2011; Endriulaitienė, Žardeckaitė-matulaitienė, &
17 Šeibokaitė, 2013; Sarma et al., 2013). However, the results are inconsistent across studies, as
18 some have indicated a stronger association between risk-accepting personality traits (e.g.,
19 sensation seeking, impulsivity) and risky driving in people younger than 25 years old
20 (Bachoo et al., 2013; Cestac et al., 2011; Sarma et al., 2013), whereas others have found the
21 opposite pattern (Endriulaitienė et al., 2013) or age-specific correlations based on the type of
22 risky behaviour investigated (T. G. Brown et al., 2017). In addition, the influence of
23 personality traits on driving attitudes and behaviours can vary across gender groups
24 (Berdoulat, Vavassori, & Sastre, 2013; Miller & Taubman - Ben-Ari, 2010) and across
25 different social and environmental circumstances (Gauld, Lewis, White, & Watson, 2016;
26 McDonald & Sommers, 2015; Taubman – Ben-Ari, Kaplan, Lotan, & Prato, 2016); thus,
27 more research is needed in this area to delineate the role of personality factors, both alone and
28 in conjunction with other variables such as risk perception.

29 Emotional states can influence driving performance as well. In a recent experimental
30 study, drivers aged 18-21 completed a simulated drive while visually exposed to words that
31 elicited either a relaxed positive emotion (“calm”), an arousing positive emotion (“exciting”),
32 a negative emotion (“sad”), or a neutral word with no relation to emotions (“hat”). Both
33 arousing positive emotions and negative emotions were linked with faster and less safe

1 driving than relaxed positive states (Eherenfreund-Hager, Taubman – Ben-Ari, Toledo, &
2 Farah, 2017). Similar results were found in a study with drivers aged 27 and older (Zimasa,
3 Jamson, & Henson, 2017), suggesting that the impact of emotions on driving performance
4 might be less dependent on the person's age. However, a recent review of studies
5 demonstrated that brain and social changes experienced in young age might make young
6 drivers more susceptible than older individuals to their inner states (Scott-Parker, 2017).
7 Similarly, a recent meta-analysis found that younger drivers tend to display anger while
8 driving more frequently and intensely than older drivers, and this is significantly associated
9 with aggressive driving (Zhang & Chan, 2016). However, different social and environmental
10 conditions can trigger specific emotional states (Scott-Parker, 2017), supporting the idea that
11 an ecological approach is useful to better understand determinants of risk in young drivers.

12 Lastly, individual socioeconomic circumstances, such as education or employment,
13 also play a role in crash risk and severity of injury in young car drivers, with greater risk for
14 those in more disadvantaged circumstances (H. Y. Chen, Ivers, et al., 2010; H. Y. Chen,
15 Senserrick, et al., 2010). In a nationally representative sample of young Swedish drivers
16 involved in road traffic crashes, those from manual worker families had 80 times higher risk
17 of injury than those from families with higher socioeconomic status (Hasselberg &
18 Laflamme, 2008). It is notable, however, that the socioeconomic status of a driver may have
19 an indirect influence on crash risk because it is associated with other mediating factors, for
20 example the lower quality of the car that can be afforded by a young driver (Williams, Leaf,
21 Simons-Morton, & Hartos, 2006), as well as social and cultural attitudes which can be more
22 accepting of risky driving in disadvantaged areas (H. Y. Chen, Ivers, et al., 2010; Rakauskas,
23 Ward, & Gerberich, 2009). These factors will be discussed in the sections 6.1 (Car Type and
24 Conditions) and 7.1 (Cultural Norms). Some studies that have looked at socioeconomic status
25 and road crashes have indicated no significant differences among age groups (Males, 2009),
26 suggesting that this effect is not unique to young driver, however it is a factor worth
27 considering in an ecological approach to young driver risk.

28 Developmental changes in cognitive and affective processes can make teenagers and
29 young adults less effective in dealing with complex driving situations than older individuals,
30 as well as cause less realistic perceptions of driving risks and skills. While differences in
31 cognitive skills (e.g., hazard perception) between drivers of different age and/or experience
32 have been extensively investigated in the literature, studies on personal characteristics appear
33 to have mainly focused on individual differences within young groups. For this reason, it is

1 hard to conclude whether, for instance, sensation seeking is a stronger indicator of risky
2 driving behaviour in younger than older drivers. Nonetheless, some evidence indicates that
3 driving risk, particularly the level of engagement in risky driving behaviours, is increased in
4 younger than older drivers because of their particular stage of development, and that
5 promoting safe attitudes towards driving might moderate the negative impact of personal
6 characteristics that are less amenable to change (e.g. personality traits). As will be described
7 in the following section 5.1, designing training and interventions that encourage safer driving
8 behaviours together with promoting positive social influences can compensate for individual
9 characteristics that put young drivers at risk of crashes.

10

11 **5. Social Micro-System**

12 **5.1 Experience, Training, and Interventions**

13 Lack of experience in young drivers is an important risk factor for unsafe driving and
14 crashes (McDonald et al., 2013; Winston, McDonald, Kandadai, Seacrist, & Winston, 2014),
15 and the first six months after licensure appear to be the riskiest time for young novice drivers
16 (Li, Guo, Klauer, & Simons-Morton, 2017; Taubman-Ben-Ari & Lotan, 2011). Among
17 young drivers, the youngest (16-17 years old) are the most at risk in the first stages after
18 licensure (Engström, Gregersen, Granström, & Nyberg, 2008), but in fact they are the group
19 who benefits the most from driving frequently and in different road scenarios (Curry,
20 Metzger, Williams, & Tefft, 2017; Curry, Pfeiffer, et al., 2015; McCartt, Mayhew, Braitman,
21 Ferguson, & Simpson, 2009). Thus, gaining early driving experience is a major protective
22 factor for the reduction of crash risk in young novice drivers, and this is mainly because it
23 enables to improve high-level driving-related cognitive skills. Positive associations have in
24 fact been found between mileage covered and hazard detection in young novice drivers
25 (Kinnear, Kelly, Stradling, & Thomson, 2013). Studies have noted that six months after
26 licensure 17 year-old novice drivers experience significant improvements in eye glances,
27 expanding from the road ahead to rear-view and opposite mirror-window, reaching similar
28 levels of performance to those of experienced drivers (Olsen, Lee, & Simons-Morton, 2007).
29 Similarly, O'Brien *et al* (2016) found significant decreases in eye glances off the road while
30 engaging in a secondary task in novice drivers 12 months after licensure.

31 Importantly, gaining driving experience in safe circumstances (i.e., supervised,
32 limiting night-time driving or presence of passengers) can significantly decrease the risk of
33 road crashes in novice drivers, especially among the youngest (Glendon, 2014; McCartt,

1 Teoh, Fields, Braitman, & Hellinga, 2010; Zhu, Cummings, Chu, Coben, & Li, 2013). The
2 introduction of Graduate Driving Licensing (GDL) systems in the U.S., for instance, has led
3 to a 8-14% decrease in fatal crashes as well as substantial reductions in road violations
4 among 16-17 years old drivers (DePesa et al., 2017; Fell, Jones, Romano, & Voas, 2011), and
5 these benefits have been noted also in other countries that have introduced GDL (Russell,
6 Vandermeer, & Hartling, 2011).

7 As well as experience, an important protective factor for young drivers is the level of
8 training that they receive. While vehicle-handling training is useful in improving procedural
9 skills, it is less effective than cognitive training programmes (e.g., focusing on hazard
10 perception or road awareness) in promoting safe driving and reducing negative driving
11 outcomes (Beanland, Goode, Salmon, & Lenné, 2013; Isler, Starkey, & Sheppard, 2011;
12 Madigan, 2013; McDonald et al., 2017; Meir et al., 2014; Underwood, 2007). An
13 experimental study comparing the effects of high-level cognitive skills training with vehicle-
14 handling training and a control group in individuals aged 15-18 years-old found significant
15 improvements in terms of hazard perception, safe attitudes towards driving, and perceptions
16 of risks for the cognitive training only (Isler et al., 2011). Driving-related cognitive training
17 has also been shown to improve novice drivers' visual scanning, hazard perception, and road
18 awareness to match that of more experienced drivers (Divekar et al., 2016; Madigan, 2013;
19 Stahl, Donmez, & Jamieson, 2016; Underwood, 2007), with the duration of training varying
20 across studies from few weeks to four months.

21 Despite the benefits of cognitive training in improving driving skills, recent research
22 has shown that very young drivers continue to experience difficulties even after training in
23 particularly demanding road situations such as cross-flow turns (McDonald, Kandadai, et al.,
24 2015). This is an important limitation, and it highlights the need to design training
25 programmes that enable novice drivers to experience novel complex driving situations safely
26 (Simons-Morton & Ehsani, 2016). In addition, a recent review of hazard anticipation training
27 pointed out that the majority of studies evaluated the effects of the intervention only in the
28 short-term (immediately or few days after training), recommending the use of long-term
29 follow-ups to better understand the effectiveness of training programmes (McDonald,
30 Goodwin, Pradhan, Romoser, & Williams, 2015). This is another major limitation of research
31 in this area as it is currently difficult to estimate the long-term effectiveness of intervention
32 programmes.

1 Training interventions can improve risk and skills perceptions as well. An Israeli
2 study provided a 4-5 hours driving training programmes to young and older participants (age
3 range: 18-64) to improve their ability to recognise, avoid, and handle risks in demanding
4 driving situations, and found an overall increased risk perception at the end of the training
5 (Rosenbloom, Shahar, Elharar, & Danino, 2008); however, younger male participants showed
6 the smallest improvements, suggesting the need to better target these programmes to specific
7 populations.

8 Educational programmes, knowledge-based training, and behavioural interventions
9 have also shown to benefit young driving groups by raising awareness on risky behaviours
10 and promoting safer attitudes. As attitudes have been shown to moderate the influence of
11 maladaptive personality characteristics, which are less amenable to change (Mackenzie,
12 Watling, & Leal, 2015), awareness-based interventions are crucial to promote safe driving.
13 Some evidence has shown that early educational interventions can be effective in increasing
14 knowledge on safe driving. A pre-learner educational programmes provided to Irish students
15 aged 14-17 years old indicated significant improvements in driving-related knowledge, risk
16 perception and, to a certain extent, attitudes towards risky driving, with effects remaining up
17 to 9-12 months after the intervention (Ryan, 2013). In the U.S., an outreach project aimed at
18 reducing distracted driving using an interactive teaching methodology with over 1,000
19 teenagers (14-18 years old) was effective in improving the participants' perspectives on the
20 risks associated with distracted driving as well as their ability to correctly identify different
21 types of distracted driving, although the authors assessed the effects only two weeks after the
22 intervention (Hurwitz et al., 2016). Similarly, a high-school peer-generated safety campaign
23 to limit texting while driving, for instance, led to a 14% decrease in self-reported texting in
24 the car (Unni et al., 2017), and a college community programme to enforce laws against
25 drink-driving among teenagers and young adults (under 25) produced substantial reductions
26 in alcohol abuse while driving, observed via night-time roadside surveys before and during
27 the programme (McCartt, Hellinga, & Wells, 2009). In addition, a peer-to-peer intervention
28 used to promote seat belt use among teenagers in 11 high schools in the U.S. was linked to a
29 12% increase in observed seat belt use between two and four months after the intervention
30 (Goldzweig et al., 2013). Given the evidence from a recent meta-analysis that seat belt use
31 can decrease front seat fatalities by 60% and rear seat fatalities by 40% (Høye, 2016), early
32 interventions are crucial to address young drivers' risk.

1 Behavioural interventions have also proven effective in changing young drivers’
2 attitudes towards risky driving. A meta-analysis of programmes to address drink-driving, for
3 example, indicated that brief interventions (under five hours of contact) providing young
4 people (average age: 17) with information about the effects of alcohol on driving, discussing
5 legal considerations around drinking and driving, and providing guidance for harm reduction
6 led to small but significant reductions in self-reported drink-driving at 6-12 months post-
7 intervention, with stronger effects for adolescent participants (Steinka-Fry, Tanner-Smith, &
8 Hennessy, 2015; Tanner-Smith & Risser, 2016). Other interventions have instead focused on
9 providing feedback on driving performance. In a study both young novice and older
10 experienced drivers received a simulation-based feedback training to raise awareness of the
11 detrimental effects of dual tasking on driving performance, and while safer attitudes towards
12 mobile phone use while driving were noted following the training independent of driver’s
13 experience, the benefits lasted longer for the experienced than the novice group (Wang et al.,
14 2010). Research on speeding has indicated some level of effectiveness for interventions that
15 combine performance feedback with incentives or rewards as opposed to those using
16 feedback only (Bolderdijk, Knockaert, Steg, & Verhoef, 2011; Kervick, 2016; Mullen,
17 Maxwell, & Bédard, 2015). However, a study in which young drivers were rewarded to use a
18 smartphone monitoring application providing feedback on driving performance found that
19 once participants received their incentives, they stopped using the application (Lotan,
20 Musicant, & Grimberg, 2014), demonstrating the potential limitation of using extrinsic
21 motivational methods.

22 While this evidence indicates advancements in training and intervention programmes
23 over the past ten years, important limitations include the use of self-reported measures of
24 behaviour or intention, and short-term follow-ups of intervention effects. It would be
25 interesting, for instance, to understand whether the benefits of pre-learner educational
26 programmes are maintained when the participants obtain their license; in addition, the
27 potential effects of these interventions on crash rates are unclear. Furthermore, several studies
28 have noted that designing multi-dimensional interventions which consider several potential
29 intervening factors of young drivers’ risk (e.g., individual attitudes but also parents’
30 involvement and behaviour) might be more effective than targeted programmes in promoting
31 safe driving behaviour (Buckley et al., 2014; Steinka-Fry et al., 2015). In line with this
32 consideration, the evidence on the benefits of GDL suggests that promoting driving in safe

1 social and environmental circumstances is key to reduce crash risk, further supporting the
2 importance of considering factors across multiple systems.

3

4 **5.2 Family and Peers**

5

6 Young people are more susceptible to social influences than older individuals because
7 of their need to build a sense of identity and belonging to a group (J. P. Allen & Brown,
8 2008). Parents and peers - the closest sources of social contact – can significantly influence
9 the engagement in risky driving in young people through their behaviours and attitudes
10 (Carter, Bingham, Zakrajsek, Shope, & Sayer, 2014; Leadbeater, Foran, & Grove-White,
11 2008; Reniers et al., 2017; Scott-Parker, Watson, King, & Hyde, 2014b; Taubman-Ben-Ari &
12 Katz-Ben-Ami, 2012; Taubman - Ben-Ari, Kaplan, Lotan, & Prato, 2015; Watters & Beck,
13 2015).

14 **5.2.1 Family**

15 Parents' driving behaviour and attitudes, as well as the parent-child relationship,
16 influence young drivers' performance greatly (Gil, Taubman – Ben-Ari, & Toledo, 2016;
17 Schmidt, Morrongiello, & Colwell, 2014; Scott-Parker, Watson, King, & Hyde, 2015). An
18 Israeli study found that the parent's driving style predicted the child's driving style one year
19 later (Miller & Taubman - Ben-Ari, 2010). In a series of studies involving young male drivers
20 (aged 17-21 years old) and their families, the same research group found a higher rate of
21 risky driving events for participants whose parents were less committed to safety, less
22 conformed to authority, more aggressive and perceived as low-monitoring (Taubman-Ben-
23 Ari & Katz-Ben-Ami, 2012; Taubman - Ben-Ari et al., 2015; Taubman - Ben-Ari, Musicant,
24 Lotan, & Farah, 2014). Furthermore, a higher risk of drink-driving or distracted driving has
25 been noted in young drivers if they perceive their parents as engaging in those types of
26 behavior (Bingham, Zakrajsek, Almani, Shope, & Sayer, 2015; M. J. Chen, Grube, Nygaard,
27 & Miller, 2008).

28 Promoting parental involvement in the learning phase of driving, particularly in terms
29 of supervised driving practice, has been noted as an important protective factor for safe
30 driving in young adulthood as well as a determinant of time needed to reach full licensure
31 (Ehsani, Ionides, Klauer, Perlus, & Gee, 2016). However, it is important to note that not all
32 forms of parental involvement are equally effective. An experimental study found that the
33 mere presence of an adult passenger in the car did not translate into safer driving for a young

1 motorist, whereas an adult passenger providing suggestions on how to drive safely led young
2 drivers to reduce speeding, with effects transferring to situations of lone driving (Chung,
3 Choe, Lee, Lee, & Sohn, 2014). In addition, a study that monitored the type of instructions
4 given by 50 parents to young drivers in the car for four months during the learner licensing
5 phase (via cameras and audio recording) found that instructions about car handling were very
6 frequent, while in contrast directions related to hazard perception or other high-level driving
7 skills were limited, illustrating the need to guide parents on how to best support young novice
8 drivers (Goodwin, Foss, Margolis, & Harrell, 2014).

9 A recent review (Curry, Peek-Asa, Hamann, & Mirman, 2015) compared
10 interventions to promote the involvement of parents in the learning process of young drivers
11 under 21, and noted that programmes with active (i.e. direct involvement of parents) rather
12 than passive components (e.g. providing informational material), as well as those providing
13 feedback and tools to monitor driving performance (e.g. via in-vehicle monitoring systems),
14 were more effective in improving parents' supervision and in reducing risky driving
15 behaviours. However, the effects of the interventions on crash reduction were unclear and
16 longitudinal investigations were limited, indicating a clear need for improvements to design
17 and implementation of these studies. Nonetheless, important considerations emerge from
18 existing interventions. Given the strong influence of emotional and cognitive states on young
19 drivers' behaviour, programmes that focus on increasing restrictions may cause resistance in
20 a young person, and thus be less effective than interventions which foster a positive family
21 climate. In line with this, Mirman et al. (2017) found that young drivers in intermediate
22 licensing phases progressed faster to full licensure if their parents had positive perceptions of
23 their driving skills and allowed them to drive in a diverse range of environments, further
24 highlighting important interactions between social factors (parents' role and attitudes),
25 individual circumstances (young driver's perceptions) and the environmental context of
26 learning. Furthermore, providing guidance to parents on how to be vigilant of their children's
27 driving behaviours can promote safer driving (Shimshoni et al., 2015), however, tackling the
28 parents' own driving behaviour is an important aspect to take into account, as it can hinder
29 the benefits of driving interventions (Taubman – Ben-Ari, Lotan, & Prato, 2017). In this
30 sense, parents themselves exist in their own complex ecological systems, thus understanding
31 which internal and external factors can promote their involvement in the learning process can
32 help them to be better driving instructors and role models. To date, it is unclear at what age of
33 young driver parents' influence becomes less strong, but the discussed research appears to

1 indicate that early learning stages before and after licensure are a crucial period for parents to
2 be actively supportive and setting a good example, thus one might expect the effects of
3 parent-child interventions to be maximised in that time window. Lastly, promoting the
4 benefits of in-car or phone telematics to monitor safe driving with both parents and wider
5 social circles rather than with young drivers only can significantly enhance their uptake
6 (Guttman & Gesser-Edelsburg, 2011; Kervick, Hogan, O’Hora, & Sarma, 2015) and
7 potentially reduce the selection biases encountered in interventions that use monitoring
8 technologies.

9

10 **5.2.2 Peers**

11 Some studies have indicated that young drivers, contrary to older drivers, are more
12 inclined to engage in risky driving behaviours in the presence of passengers (Braitman,
13 Chaudhary, & McCartt, 2014; Donmez & Liu, 2015; Orsi, Marchetti, Montomoli, &
14 Morandi, 2013; Williams, Ferguson, & McCartt, 2007). Several international crash reports
15 indicate that driving with passengers, especially if peers, doubles the risk of a crash for young
16 drivers (Curry, Mirman, Kallan, Winston, & Durbin, 2012; Donnelly-Swift & Kelly, 2015;
17 Fell, Todd, & Voas, 2011; McEvoy, Stevenson, & Woodward, 2007; Ouimet et al., 2015;
18 Tefft, Williams, & Grabowski, 2013). Passengers’ negative influence is especially strong if
19 they are peers rather than adults (H. Y. Chen, Senserrick, et al., 2010; Simons-Morton et al.,
20 2011), if they are risk-accepting, and exert social pressure (Bingham et al., 2016). Peers’
21 pressure can be exerted actively in the car, either by verbally or physically encouraging risky
22 driving behaviours (direct pressure) or by persuading the driver (indirect pressure), for
23 example through storytelling, or it can be shared passively based on the social norms
24 accepted by the peer group (Centifanti, Modecki, Maclellan, & Gowling, 2016). Active direct
25 and indirect pressure have been shown to have stronger negative impact on young drivers’
26 speeding than passive pressure (Gheorghiu, Delhomme, & Felonneau, 2015), suggesting a
27 big influence of in-vehicle social circumstances. Experimental studies have found that driving
28 with a risk-accepting rather than a risk-averse peer passenger can double a young driver’s risk
29 of incurring in road violations (Simons-Morton, Bingham, et al., 2014) and increase driving
30 speed (Shepherd, Lane, Tapscott, & Gentile, 2011). In addition, Shepherd and colleagues
31 (2011) found that the effect of peers’ influence varied based on the type of communication,
32 showing that peer passengers who exert normative influence (i.e., persuading to modify
33 driving speed) have the strongest negative impact on young drivers (i.e., significantly

1 increase risky driving), whereas passengers who use informational influence (i.e., giving
2 advice on why speeding is good or bad) have the most positive impact.

3 Social norms shared by the peer group can significantly influence risky driving as
4 well. In both experimental and qualitative studies with young novice drivers, peers' positive
5 attitudes towards risky driving have been linked to higher speeding and unsafe driving
6 behaviours, and conversely, participants whose friends punished risky driving or perceived it
7 as unpopular were more committed to safe driving (Scott-Parker, Watson, et al., 2015;
8 Taubman - Ben-Ari et al., 2015, 2014). In addition, different components of peer
9 relationships can affect the engagement in risky driving differently depending on the young
10 driver's age, with aspects of leisure (i.e., spending leisure time together) linked to speeding
11 and distracted driving for younger male drivers (Guggenheim & Taubman – Ben-Ari, 2015).

12 Another reason why peers increase young drivers' risk is that they can act a source of
13 distraction while in the car (Ehsani et al., 2015; Heck & Carlos, 2008). In experimental
14 studies, having peer passengers led young drivers (under 25) to commit more driving errors
15 caused by distraction (e.g., reduced lane-keeping) (Ross, Jongen, Brijs, Brijs, & Wets, 2016),
16 and caused a narrower visual scanning of the road (Pradhan et al., 2014). In a naturalistic
17 study on distracted driving that used in-vehicle recording for 6 months, young drivers (16-18
18 years old) carrying multiple passengers in conditions of loud conversation and horseplay
19 were twice as likely to look away from the road longer than a second, and six times more at
20 risk of a serious road event (Foss & Goodwin, 2014). Considering the limited ability of a
21 young adult to deal with secondary tasks in the car because of the lack of automaticity in
22 driving, these results support regulations that limit the number of passengers allowed for
23 novice drivers (Fell, Todd, et al., 2011). It is important to note, however, that studies
24 comparing peers' effects on drivers of different age and/or experience are limited; thus, while
25 it is known that younger people are particularly susceptible to social pressure, it is less clear
26 to what extent peers' pressure and distracting effects are a cause of crashes more specifically
27 for young drivers than for all drivers in general.

28 Considering potential protective factors, studies have found that high inhibitory
29 control enables a young driver to be less susceptible to peers' pressure, and less likely to
30 engage in risky driving (Cascio et al., 2015; Jongen, Brijs, Brijs, & Wets, 2013; Mirman &
31 Curry, 2016), which suggests that training cognitive skills can not only improve driving
32 performance, but also moderate social influences (Lambert, Simons-Morton, Cain, Weisz, &
33 Cox, 2014). Some interventions have focused on encouraging young people to be safer

1 passengers, by promoting risk perception and fostering values on safe driving (Buckley &
2 Davidson, 2013). However, while a previous review noted some advancements in passenger-
3 related safety interventions prior to 2007 (Williams et al., 2007), more recent evidence on
4 these types of interventions is currently very limited. In one study, a school-based injury
5 prevention programme was successful in reducing passenger-related risk taking and
6 increasing intentions to intervene in friends' risky driving at 6-months follow-up (Chapman,
7 Buckley, & Sheehan, 2012). Interestingly, a training intervention for young drivers and their
8 passengers focused on promoting peer communication and collaborative safe driving
9 demonstrated short-term improvements (1-2 weeks) in following distance, hazard perception,
10 and safe in-vehicle communication in a simulated drive (Lenné, Liu, Salmon, Holden, &
11 Moss, 2011). Focusing on communication skills might represent a viable pathway to turn
12 peer passengers into resources to reduce driving risk, on one hand by promoting safer social
13 norms (Geber, Baumann, & Klimmt, 2017), and on the other hand by training them to
14 provide guidance for directions, detect road risks and reduce the distracting potential of in-
15 vehicle technology (McDonald & Sommers, 2016). However, the few studies available on
16 peer interventions share design limitations with behavioural and educational interventions
17 discussed above, namely, the short-term follow-ups of effects, and the use of self-reported
18 outcome measures. In line with the ecological framework proposed in this paper, Williams
19 and colleagues (2007) suggested that, in order to maximise their effectiveness, peer-focused
20 interventions need more complex designs which integrate protective factors at multiple
21 ecological levels: on one hand involving parents (micro social system) can improve young
22 drivers' awareness of the increased risk for a young driver carrying passengers; on the other,
23 reinforcing laws and restrictions (macro system) can help to create safer attitudes towards
24 driving.

25

26 **6. Environmental Micro-System: Car and Road Environment**

27 **6.1 In-vehicle technology**

28 Interacting with technology while driving is a distracting activity. Limited evidence
29 exists for distracting effects of technological systems embedded in the car, such as the radio
30 (Brodsky & Slor, 2013) or driving monitoring systems (Kervick, 2016). Conversely, several
31 studies have explored the effects of using a mobile phone while driving, as both calling and
32 texting can significantly decrease driving performance and increase the risk of a crash (Caird,
33 Willness, Steel, & Scialfa, 2008; Collet, Guillot, & Petit, 2010). This is in line with a

1 systematic review of research on distracted driving which found that studies examining
2 mobile phone use were 16% more likely than those exploring other sources of distraction to
3 find a detrimental association between engaging in a secondary task and driving performance
4 (Ferdinand & Menachemi, 2014). In a naturalistic study monitoring teenage drivers, Simons-
5 Morton and colleagues (2014) noted that glancing off the road to pay attention to a secondary
6 task for longer than two seconds was associated with three times higher risk of crashes and
7 near-crashes, and such risk increased to five times more when engaging with a wireless
8 secondary task (i.e., talking on the phone or texting). Texting in particular increases both
9 motor and cognitive load (due to holding a device and manipulating it), leading to
10 significantly longer glances off the road, an increase in missed lane changes, and
11 considerably higher variability in lane position and following distances (Hosking, Young, &
12 Regan, 2009).

13 Distracted driving related to mobile phone use is a problem impacting not only young
14 drivers, but the wider population in general (Overton, Rives, Hecht, Shafi, & Gandhi, 2015),
15 as noted in some studies that have found similar crash risk in younger and older drivers
16 linked to using a mobile phone (Donmez & Liu, 2015; McEvoy et al., 2007). On the other
17 hand, however, experimental studies have shown that young novice drivers are more
18 negatively affected by secondary tasks than experienced drivers (H. Lee et al., 2015). In a
19 study where both novice and experienced drivers engaged in a hands-free phone conversation
20 while driving, both groups experienced decreases in performance, however, novice
21 participants showed lower situational awareness and committed a higher number of driving
22 infractions (Kass, Cole, & Stanny, 2007). Another study found that novice drivers had an
23 increased risk of crashes and near-crashes when engaging in multiple in-vehicle activities
24 including dialling a cell phone, reaching for the phone or other objects, texting, eating, or
25 looking at objects on the roadside, whereas experienced drivers' risk increased significantly
26 in association with dialling only (Klauer et al., 2014). These results are in line with the idea
27 that young motorists' lack of automaticity in driving due to little experience, together with
28 limited self-regulatory behaviour due to cognitive development, can cause a cognitive
29 workload when engaging with sources of distraction in the car that can lead to incorrect or
30 insufficient allocation of attention to the road, and as a consequence increase the risk of road
31 crashes (J. D. Lee, 2007). Reports of crashes have in fact shown that, together with carrying
32 passengers, using a mobile phone while driving can increase young drivers' risk of severe
33 crashes up to four times (Neyens & Boyle, 2008). In a report of American crashes in the

1 period 2003-2008, younger drivers (under 25) who talked on a cell phone while driving had a
2 significantly higher risk of severe crash injuries than those aged 25 and over (Donmez & Liu,
3 2015). Another report of fatal crashes in the U.S. in 2011 indicated that 21% of drivers aged
4 15-19 years old involved in distraction-related crashes had been using a mobile phone at the
5 time of the crash (Kahn, Cisneros, Lotfipour, Imani, & Chakravarthy, 2015).

6 Surprisingly, a recent study exploring the effects of texting on lane excursions (i.e.,
7 deviation from the centre of the lane) in different age groups found that, although texting had
8 in general a negative impact on driving performance across all ages, the youngest group
9 (aged 18-24) was the least negatively affected (Rumschlag et al., 2015). A possible reason for
10 this result could be young drivers' higher frequency of mobile phone use while driving
11 (Braitman & McCartt, 2010; Brusque & Alauzet, 2008; Gras et al., 2007). However, a study
12 found no significant differences in the frequency of mobile phone use while driving between
13 young drivers and their parents (Mirman, Durbin, Lee, & Seifert, 2017). Interestingly, despite
14 having increased significantly in the last decade, the amount of time using mobile phones is
15 not necessarily predictive of crashes (Farmer, Klauer, McClafferty, & Guo, 2015), possibly
16 because an increased used of mobile phones has changed how drivers allocate their attention
17 to different tasks, or because drivers have learned to use compensatory strategies to reduce
18 the impact of distraction (e.g., reducing speed) (Saifuzzaman, Haque, Zheng, & Washington,
19 2015).

20 While it is clear that using a mobile-phone while driving can increase the risk of
21 crashes, the discussed evidence is inconclusive in relation to whether this risk is different for
22 drivers of varying age and/or experience. While rapid changes in mobile phone use could
23 explain the inconsistencies found across studies, recent reviews have highlighted important
24 methodological limitations in the literature on driving-related multi-tasking, including the
25 lack of a standardised operationalisation of secondary tasks or multi-tasking, lack of clarity
26 on the mechanisms that lead to a crash during distracted driving, as well as the lack of cross-
27 national and longitudinal studies (Keseru & Macharis, 2017; Klauer, Ehsani, McGehee, &
28 Manser, 2015). Addressing these limitations in future research is thus key to clarify the
29 contribution of in-vehicle technology to young drivers' crash risk. These aspects highlight the
30 need for more robust research on multi-tasking while driving which compares young and
31 novice drivers.

32

33 **6.2 Car type and conditions**

1 While in-car distracting conditions are the most impactful environmental factor of
2 crashes among novice drivers, the car state and/or type can affect risk as well. Young drivers,
3 especially those who are not financially independent or with lower socioeconomic status, are
4 more likely to use smaller, older and less safe cars than adult drivers (Brookland & Begg,
5 2011; Eichelberger, Teoh, & McCartt, 2015; Hellinga, McCartt, & Haire, 2007; Keall &
6 Newstead, 2013b), and poorer car conditions can lead to a higher risk of fatal crashes and
7 injuries. Furthermore, vehicle power can affect young drivers' crash risk as well. A study on
8 crashes in Australia and New Zealand found that drivers under 24 had a 69% increase in the
9 risk of being involved in a crash if driving a high-performance car (Keall & Newstead,
10 2013a). Whether optimal car conditions/types exist specifically for young drivers remains to
11 be established, and financial costs may make this factor more challenging to address than
12 modifiable behavioural or social factors. Nonetheless, raising young drivers' awareness of the
13 risks linked with poor car conditions or high vehicle power, may be a useful intervention
14 strategy, though to date no such intervention studies have been published.

15

16 **6.3 Road Circumstances**

17 The road system and the day/time of driving can also affect the risk of a crash for all
18 drivers (Alian, Baker, & Wood, 2016a; Twisk, Commandeur, Bos, Shope, & Kok, 2015).
19 Some studies have found that young drivers, especially if male, are more likely than older
20 drivers to be involved in crashes occurring on rural roads at night-time (Alian, Baker, &
21 Wood, 2016b; Bedford, McKeown, O'Farrell, & Howell, 2009; Hasselberg & Laflamme,
22 2009; Houwing & Twisk, 2015; Konstantopoulos et al., 2010). A report from the UK
23 indicated that the highest proportion of fatalities associated with road traffic collisions
24 occurred on rural roads, often involving drivers aged 20-25 year-old (Lachowycz & Brown,
25 2007). An Australian prospective study found that young rural drivers had overall lower risk
26 of crashes than urban drivers, however, they were more at risk of incurring in a single vehicle
27 crash, mainly due to speeding on curved roads (H. Y. Chen et al., 2009). The same
28 researchers found that Australian young drivers' fatal crashes had decreased between 1997
29 and 2007 by 5%, but the highest decreases were among urban rather than rural drivers (H. Y.
30 Chen, Senserrick, et al., 2010). One reason for the higher risk of crashes on rural roads is the
31 lower level of traffic and road complexity (i.e., higher visibility), which can induce the driver
32 to feel more in control and thus more inclined to distraction, as emerged for example in a
33 Greek study using a driving simulator with drivers aged 18-28 (Yannis, Laiou, Papantoniou,

1 & Christoforou, 2014). These biases might not necessarily vary across age (Cox, Beanland, &
2 Filtness, 2017), however, considering the limited driving skills of a young novice driver and
3 the negative impact of social pressure, limiting access to rural roads especially at night-time
4 during the weekend could significantly reduce crashes (Kervick, 2016). On the other hand,
5 conditions of high clutter (e.g., urban busy roads) can as well impact negatively on driving
6 performance if the driver is engaged in a secondary task (Oviedo-Trespalacios, Haque, King,
7 & Washington, 2017), indicating that road conditions might not determine crash risk directly,
8 but in interaction with individual conditions, for example alcohol use (Pour-Rouholamin,
9 Zhou, & Zhou, 2017), and in-vehicle circumstances, such as mobile phone use or the
10 presence of passengers.

11 Considering potential interventions, a recent study used a computer-based educational
12 tool with high school students living in rural areas to raise awareness of the specific risks
13 associated with driving on rural roads (Kumfer, Liu, Wu, Wei, & Sama, 2017), and reported
14 significant improvements (higher awareness of rural road safety issues), as assessed
15 immediately after the intervention. Addressing environmental circumstances has the potential
16 to improve existing interventions, however no other studies using this type of intervention
17 were found in the recent literature.

18

19 **7. Macro-System: Socio-Cultural Context**

20 **7.1 Cultural Norms**

21 The wider social context in which young people grow up can indirectly influence their
22 driving performance through shared cultural norms which can be more or less permissive of
23 risky driving (Nævestad & Bjørnskau, 2012), although their impact on the individual can be
24 moderated by proximal social influence such as parents and peers. For instance, a recent
25 study compared determinants of driving styles between Israeli and Australian young drivers
26 (Skvirsky, Taubman, -Ari, Greenbury, & Prato, 2017), and found that the influence of parents
27 and peers was equally strong in both samples.

28 Nonetheless, a few studies have conducted cross-cultural comparisons and noted
29 some macro-level differences. One study found that, compared to other countries, Australian
30 young drivers did not show strong associations between sensation seeking and drink driving,
31 possible because alcohol use associated with driving might be perceived as less appealing in
32 Australia rather than in other countries (Hatfield et al., 2014). Similarly, a cross-national
33 study found a higher rate of risky driving in adolescent and young Colombian drivers than in

1 those from Australia or New Zealand, probably due to more permissive licensing
2 enforcements (Scott-Parker & Oviedo-Trespalacios, 2017).

3 Although not focused on young drivers only, a cross-national study noted culture-
4 based differences in risk perception and driving behaviour between Norway, Russia, India,
5 Ghana, Tanzania, Uganda, Turkey and Iran: Specifically, personal attitudes and behaviours
6 were found to be more influential than situational factors of safe driving in cultures which
7 had individualistic (i.e., prioritising the self and being independent rather than conform to a
8 group mentality) than collectivistic views (i.e., prioritising the needs of a group or a
9 community over those of the individual) (Nordfjærna, Şimşekoğlub, & Rundmo, 2014).
10 Another study comparing hazard perception in Malaysian and British drivers noted a higher
11 threshold of danger for Malaysian drivers (despite no cross-cultural differences in visual
12 strategies were found), potentially due to a more dangerous road environment in Malaysia
13 (Lim, Sheppard, & Crundall, 2013). These findings are indicative of a potential role of both
14 culture and law enforcements in safe driving, however, to the best of our knowledge there are
15 no cross-national studies comparing novice and experienced drivers across different areas,
16 limiting the possibility to conclude on whether cultural influences might change based on
17 drivers' age or experience.

18 Some cultural differences can also be found based on the level of urbanity or rurality
19 of the place of residence, although the results of available studies on young drivers appear to
20 be inconsistent. An Australian qualitative study found that young rural dwellers relied heavily
21 on cars to move around because of geographical isolation, tended to begin driving at a very
22 early age (before minimum age of licensure) and reported a lack of opportunities for
23 professional tuition, which influenced their increased acceptance of speeding and a lower
24 adherence to road rules - all aspects that put them more at risk of crashes while on the road
25 (Knight, Iverson, & Harris, 2012, 2013). On the other hand, by surveying teens living in or
26 outside towns in a rural U.S. region, Ramirez and colleagues (2013) found that, although
27 attitudes towards general driving safety did not differ between the two groups, participants
28 living in towns had poorer safety attitudes towards rural roadway hazards, potentially due to
29 lower exposure to and knowledge about rural roads.

30 While attitudes towards safe driving appear to vary across cultures, it is difficult to
31 conclude whether the broad cultural context might have a specific impact on young novice
32 drivers as opposed to the rest of the driving population, and thus more studies are needed that
33 explore the impact of cultural norms on drivers of different age and experience.

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7.2 Road Rules and Enforcement

Laws and restrictions related to road safety vary across countries and states, and areas where stricter rules are in place have seen reductions in crashes and road fatalities over the years. An example is the introduction of GDL which, as noted in section 5.1, has proven effective in reducing young drivers' crash risk (Zhu et al., 2013) as well as improving compliance with road rules (DePesa et al., 2017). Rules aimed at reducing risky driving behaviours have also been investigated. For instance, setting a minimum legal age for alcohol consumptions has been associated with reductions in drink-driving among younger people (McCartt, Hellinga, & Kirley, 2010). Some studies have investigated the effects of regulations for mobile phone use while driving and noted that strict law enforcements to limit mobile phone use while driving can significantly reduce crashes. For instance, a large study comparing the effect of laws tackling distracted driving across several U.S. states found that young drivers living in areas with universal texting bans (i.e., applied to all ages) together with complete cell phone bans applied to young drivers were less likely to report texting while driving (Rudisill & Zhu, 2015) when compared to those in states where those bans had not been implemented. Laws that target texting specifically have also shown to be more effective in reducing texting while driving among high school students than laws banning all types of phone use in the car (Qiao & Bell, 2016). However, a recent review of 11 international studies found that the evidence for a lower prevalence of young drivers' crashes following cell phone restrictions was inconclusive, especially in relation to comparisons of effects on novice and experienced drivers (Ehsani et al., 2016). While having laws in place is important to promote a safer driving culture, the implementation and enforcement of rules depends greatly on social acceptance and norms, as shown for example in a study in Northern Ireland where GDL is in the process of being introduced and young drivers' attitudes towards it appear to be influenced by the attitudes of family and peers (Christie, Steinbach, Green, Mullan, & Prior, 2017). Similarly, studies on young Australian provisional drivers noted that compliance with road rules was more dependent on informal deterrence given by parents than on formal deterrence or experiencing enforcement (S. Allen, Murphy, & Bates, 2017; L. Bates, Darvell, & Watson, 2017). As suggested by Scott-Parker and colleagues (2016), concerted actions by key players at multiple levels are needed to enforce road rules and drive compliance, including families, local communities, and governments. This supports the idea that understanding interactions between individual, micro- and macro-level factors at the exo-

1 system level is important in determining compliance and should be examined in future
2 research.

3

4 **7.3 Safety Campaigns**

5 Safety campaigns and advertisements are often designed in the form of threat appeals
6 to raise awareness of road and driving risks. Although threat appeals are effective in eliciting
7 fear, a meta-analysis of experimental studies found that these effects do not necessarily
8 translate into safer driving behaviours (Carey, McDermott, & Sarma, 2013). This is in line
9 with the recent finding that young drivers' intentions to drive safely may not necessarily
10 match their actual driving behaviour after viewing safety ads (Plant, Irwin, & Chekaluk,
11 2017). Some studies have shown that the communication strategy used in an appeal, as well
12 as the driver's experience, can moderate its impact on driving. A study conducted in Israel
13 found that implicit rather than explicit threats (showing the video of a group of friends
14 driving in a car with one of them not wearing a seat belt, and omitting vs. including the clip
15 of the crash) were more effective in improving hazard perception in novice rather than
16 experienced drivers (Hoffman & Rosenbloom, 2016).

17 Implicit threats have also been shown to be more effective on young drivers when
18 appeals use stereotypes. An Australian experimental study (Skorich et al., 2013) with
19 provisional license drivers (Mean age = 18) manipulated stereotype threat by asking
20 participants to either identify themselves as provisional license drivers (implicit
21 categorisation condition) or to identify themselves and read a series of negative facts
22 associated with provisional license drivers (explicit stereotype condition); in a third control
23 group no stereotypes related to the driving status were elicited. The results showed that those
24 who had received an implicit stereotype threat (i.e., who had categorised themselves as
25 provisional license drivers but not told explicitly that they were an at risk driving group) had
26 improvements in a hazard perception task from baseline (i.e., before receiving the threat),
27 while those who had received an explicit threat were actually worse, possibly because of a
28 negative impact of the explicit threat on self-esteem, supporting the argument that implicit
29 threats are more effective on young drivers than explicit ones. In line with these findings,
30 research conducted with Irish male drivers aged 18-24 (Carey & Sarma, 2016) found that
31 road safety ads eliciting fear together with sense of efficacy (i.e., showing a collision and
32 including questions on-screen inviting the viewer to engage with the content of the ad) were
33 more effective in reducing speeding in a simulated drive than appeals using fear only (i.e.,

1 showing a collision without the questions); however, inducing a state of anger in the
2 participants impacted negatively on the positive effects of the ads. Different effects of
3 educational campaigns have also been noted based on the users' gender and the types of
4 motivational orientations addressed (Gauld, Lewis, White, Fleiter, & Watson, 2017). These
5 findings point out the importance of considering personal characteristics (i.e., age, emotional
6 states) and driving experience to design safety campaigns that are effective specifically for
7 young drivers. Importantly, given the emotional valence of threat appeals, integrating them
8 with positive or empowering messages appears to be an important element to promote safer
9 driving in young people. Social aspects are also to be taken into account: as noted in section
10 5.1, school-run campaigns with a peer-to-peer format appear to be particularly effective in
11 improving driving behaviour or attitudes. However, once again using short-term follow-ups
12 to test campaigns effects and the lack of data on potential links with crash rates limit our
13 understanding of the role of safety campaigns for reducing young drivers' risk.

14

15 **8. Discussion**

16 The present review provided an overview of recent evidence on the individual, social,
17 and environmental factors that put young novice drivers at risk of road crashes and explored
18 factors that can promote safe driving (particularly in terms of interventions and training
19 programmes) in light of ecological systems theory. Here we summarise the most important
20 risk and protective factors and their links, as well as advancements and gaps in the literature.

21 **8.1 Risk and protective factors and their links**

22 Considering individual-level indicators of crash risk, clear disadvantages for young
23 inexperienced drivers (as compared to experienced drivers) have emerged in terms of driving-
24 related cognitive skills due to lack of experience and developmental processes. Thanks to
25 advancements in neuroimaging and virtual reality, experimental studies have shown that
26 untrained high-level cognitive skills such as hazard perception and inhibitory control are
27 strong predictors of a less effective management of complex road situations as well as a
28 higher susceptibility to in-car distractions, including passengers and mobile phones. While
29 lower cognitive performance behind the wheel can increase crash risk directly, other
30 individual characteristics, including skills and risk perceptions, personality, and emotional
31 states can cause a higher engagement in risky driving behaviours which in turn leads to
32 higher risk of crashes. Such characteristics appear however to be strongly influenced by
33 social and environmental circumstances. Important risk factors for young novice drivers in
34 the social domain include risk-accepting peers, and/or parents who engage themselves in

1 risky driving or who are not involved in the learning process, as they can promote unsafe
2 attitudes towards driving as well as risky driving behaviours, and thus affect the effectiveness
3 of interventions or regulations. In addition, increasing use of in-vehicle monitoring systems,
4 and thus of investigations in naturalistic settings, has identified carrying peer passengers and
5 interacting with technological devices while driving (especially if mobile phones) as strong
6 environmental predictors of distracted driving and thus of road crashes.

7 On the other hand, positive learning and social influences can help young drivers to
8 acquire driving experience safely and more effectively. There is growing consensus that
9 cognitive training programmes, together with safe and gradually more complex driving
10 experiences (i.e., GDL), can help young novice drivers to learn to master the complex task
11 that is driving (Glendon, 2014). In addition, behavioural and educational interventions that
12 have been developed over the past ten years, for instance those raising awareness on driving
13 risks in interactive ways, or those that involve parents and peers in the learning process, have
14 shown some level of effectiveness in promoting safer driving among young groups,
15 especially if provided at a pre-learner stage. Incorporating incentives and rewards into
16 interventions, especially those providing feedback on driving performance, can add to the
17 effectiveness of the programmes. More broadly, promoting a culture of safe driving through
18 strict law enforcements or safety campaigns is also important to reduce young drivers' risks,
19 but these factors have been investigated to a lesser extent and appear to have a more indirect
20 impact on risk mediated by social norms and attitudes shared within peer groups and families.

21 Some studies have investigated the complex interactions between factors across
22 different systems, highlighting how crashes seldom have one unique cause: for instance, a
23 review of police records of crashes linked to alcohol abuse in the U.S. noted that drivers aged
24 16-19 years old were more likely than drivers aged 45-65 to be involved in alcohol-related
25 crashes in the presence of passengers and when driving at night-time during the weekend
26 (Bingham, Shope, Parow, & Raghunathan, 2009). Here we see the interaction of individual
27 and micro-level social/environmental factors (what we define in our framework as meso-
28 system) that put a young driver to a heightened risk of crashes. Furthermore, many of the
29 reviewed studies on perceptions and attitudes towards driving safely suggest an important
30 mediating role of micro-level social and environmental circumstances (e.g., presence of
31 passengers and the road context), once again supporting the importance of identifying links
32 between factors at the meso-system level to better understand what increases or reduces
33 young drivers' risk. Considering the exo-system (i.e., links between individual, micro- and

1 macro-level factors), studies have shown that the acceptance or enforcement of driving rules
2 or monitoring systems by young drivers can be promoted by involving peers and parents
3 (Christie et al., 2017; Kervick et al., 2015), and that compliance might vary depending on the
4 geographical location of residence (Knight et al., 2013). Similarly, the effectiveness of safety
5 campaigns can be increased by taking into account the drivers' emotional states or
6 motivational orientations (Carey & Sarma, 2016). While this evidence is encouraging and
7 highlights increasing attempts to identify synergies between factors, the future section will
8 discuss a number of gaps in the literature that need to be addressed by future research.

10 **8.2 Future directions**

11
12 Despite the advancements in knowledge provided by the recent evidence, some
13 important limitations need to be addressed. Firstly, comparisons of driving performance
14 based on age or experience have been conducted extensively for some domains (i.e.,
15 cognitive skills), but need further investigation for other aspects (e.g., perceptions and
16 attitudes, peers' norms and roles as passengers, mobile phone use, or cultural norms). It is
17 intuitive that developmental changes put young novice drivers at a higher risk of unsafe
18 driving than experienced ones, however, the available literature fails to clearly quantify the
19 magnitude of differences in risk for several factors; in some cases (e.g., mobile phone use
20 while driving), it appears to suggest no stronger negative impact for young novice drivers.
21 Even though several studies have demonstrated that age and experience have a distinct
22 impact on driving performance, these two factors appear to be used interchangeably across
23 many studies, which limits our understanding of their differential influence and calls for
24 future studies to conceptualise and investigate age and experience as two distinct factors.
25 Along this, a better understanding of risk for young drivers related to factors such as mobile-
26 phone use will be achieved through a reduction in methodological heterogeneity across
27 studies, including the use of standardised definitions of factors or mechanisms of risk (e.g.,
28 multi-tasking while driving).

29 Considering protective factors such as training and interventions, reaching
30 conclusions on their effectiveness is limited by the short-term follow-ups employed, the lack
31 of longitudinal investigations, and the tendency to use self-reported intentions or attitudes
32 rather than testing direct effects on crash reduction. Importantly, while an increasing number
33 of studies over the past ten years has begun to consider clusters of internal and external

1 factors that may contribute to reduce young drivers' risk (Gil et al., 2016), these findings are
2 yet to be translated into multi-faceted interventions that take into account multiple levels of
3 influences (individual, micro- and macro-level) targeted to young novice individuals
4 (Buckley et al., 2014; Scott-Parker, Goode, et al., 2015; Scott-Parker et al., 2016; Steinka-Fry
5 et al., 2015; Williams et al., 2007). In order to address these limitations, an ecological
6 perspective is needed to better clarify the interplay of factors across multiple levels. The
7 framework proposed in the present review was built with the aim to highlight the most
8 important risk and protective factors of young drivers' crashes that have emerged in the past
9 ten years of research, and to synthesise these factors into an ecological framework to guide
10 future studies in investigating their links. This review is not without limitations. While we
11 used a number of information sources, this work is not a systematic review of all the relevant
12 literature. In addition, our search strategy did not include terms such as "teen drivers" or
13 "provisional drivers", although studies with these words were captured by our search.
14 Nonetheless, we aimed to provide an overview of what recent studies have contributed to our
15 understanding of young drivers' crash risk based on well-established frameworks and models
16 of development, and found that the structure of our framework appropriately represented the
17 content of the included papers. Importantly, our framework enabled us to highlight current
18 gaps in research and point out how a more holistic and ecological approach that focuses on
19 clusters of factors has the potential to maximise the efforts undertaken to tackle the young
20 driver problem. This, together with an investigation of the benefits of existing interventions
21 over a longer time, can better inform future preventive programmes and make them more
22 cost-effective.

23

24 **9. Conclusion**

25 Research on young novice drivers has demonstrated that training driving-related
26 cognitive skills and promoting positive social influences can reduce the risk of crashes. The
27 available evidence is extensive, and the last decade has seen substantial progress in
28 addressing the young driver problem. However, our understanding of the overlap and
29 interactions between factors is limited. Adopting an ecological perspective is crucial to
30 clarify how developmental processes make young novice drivers more at risk than
31 experienced drivers of crashes directly (lack of experience) or indirectly (attitudes and
32 behaviours), and to identify social and environmental circumstances that can help to reduce
33 risk. While we are not there yet, there is an increasing acknowledgment of the importance of

- 1 investigating clusters of factors, and this, together with improved methodologies and
- 2 advances in technologies will surely allow us to progress even further over the next ten years.

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