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WTN Youth Health Contest  
Paper and Reflection  
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### Empowering Teens for Safer Roads Tomorrow

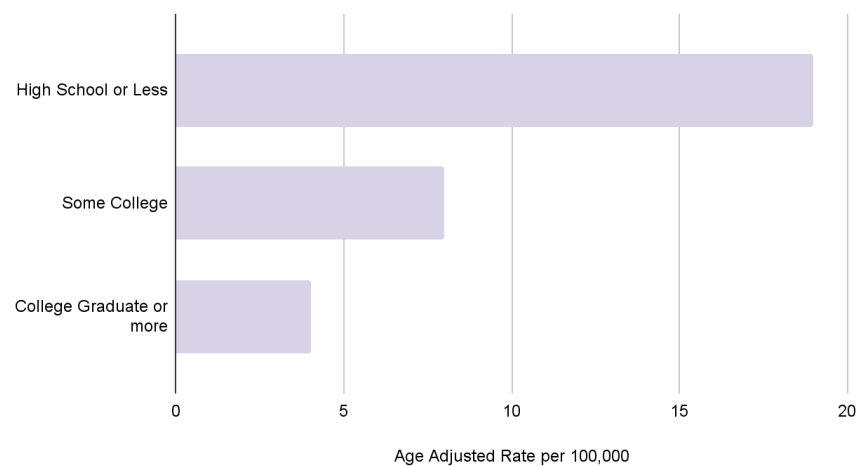
In today's fast paced world, navigating the roads is especially challenging, specifically for inexperienced drivers. Among those experienced drivers, teenagers are the most vulnerable, facing a higher risk of being involved in a car crash due to their limited driving experience and propensity to make not thought out decisions. Recognizing the issue and the need to address it, my project focuses on promoting road safety among teens and inexperienced drivers. My goal is to promote road safety for teen drivers and help them make responsible choices while behind the wheel to ultimately contribute to safer roads for all of us. Because many teens use social media to communicate and learn information, my message will be spread on social media. By meeting them where they are, I am ensuring that they are engaged and the information is accessible to them. As well as posted on social media, my campaign can also be printed and posted around schools, cities, etc to make sure that teens and drivers without phones can also access the information.

According to the Washington State Department of Health, people with only high school education or less have higher rates of fatal car crashes, showing a clear disparity in road safety outcomes based on levels of education. They also found that motor vehicle related death rates are higher in low income neighborhoods and among those with lower education. To reach these communities, my project aims to promote safe driving practices to the younger population in order to be sure that they are attaining the information while they are still in school and learning how to drive. By ensuring that everyone, regardless of their educational background, has access

to comprehensive and understandable information about safe driving practices, we can work towards reducing the incidences of fatal motor vehicle crashes among this demographic.

Ultimately by prioritizing education and awareness, I hope we can address the disparities in road safety outcomes and move towards a future where vehicle crashes aren't due to socio-economic factors.

Education of drivers in Fatal Motor Vehicle Accidents (2003-2005)



In addition to addressing the disparities seen in motor vehicle crashes, my project also aims to have a significant impact on public health and the well being of people in Washington. By promoting safe driving practices to teens and young drivers, I hope to reduce the risk of fatal crashes and also prevent serious injuries and disabilities resulting from vehicle crashes. The impact vehicle crashes have on people cannot be understated. Car crashes not only affect individuals and families involved but also have huge social and economic impacts. Vehicle crashes can also lead to increased healthcare costs, loss of productivity, and emotional trauma. According to the National Safety Council, in 2020 the estimated total of car crashes was \$474 billion, which was used on lawsuits, medical bills, workers, etc. On average, a driver who was involved in an at fault motor vehicle crashes will see a 34 percent increase in their insurance

premium. By promoting safe driving through education and awareness, my project will lower the negative consequences of crashes and contribute to a safer, healthier, and happier life for all.

**Reflection**

I was inspired to bring awareness to motor vehicle crashes in teen drivers because of my own personal history and also current events happening in my life right now. As I turned fifteen in March this year, my dad enrolled me in drivers-ed and got me my driver's permit so I could begin to drive. Although I was extremely excited to finally reach this milestone, I was hesitant because I knew about the dangers of driving and consequences of poor-decision making. When I was a fourth grader in 2019, I vividly remember biking home with my family when a delivery driver, who was on his phone and not paying attention, didn't see me and hit me. Thankfully, I didn't have any large injuries however after that traumatic incident I haven't gone biking since. The thought that a single moment of distraction could have resulted in serious injuries or worse has been with me ever since, one of the main factors why I decided to choose this topic.

During my process of researching, I had a hard time choosing a topic that I thought was meaningful enough and could be used to make a real change in our community. I had initially planned on researching other topics, however I stuck with teen drivers. My parents gave me ideas on what topic I should use, but in the end I decided to go with my driving one because it interested me the most and I could resonate with me.

After completing this project I definitely gained knowledge on vehicle crashes and teen drivers, however more importantly I learned how to use and analyze data to prompt a serious cause and simplify it so people can easily understand the information. Through my project, I developed communication skills to present complex information and tailor the content effectively to my target audience, while still keeping it engaging and interesting to look at.

In summary, my project has allowed me to gain new insights about driving and also has prepared me for future projects to come. I hope that it will continue to bring attention to car crashes and decrease the levels of crashes through education and awareness.

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