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HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS AND TEEN DRIVING SAFETY: TOPICS DISCUSSED AND COMMUNICATION PRODUCTS USED IN PRACTICE

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Background Traffic crashes are the leading cause of death among US teens. Healthcare providers who care for adolescents have an opportunity to address the issue and discuss what works to keep teen drivers safe on the road.

Aims To assess teen driving safety topics addressed by healthcare providers during the patient encounter and to assess their use of available health information resources.

Methods Web-based survey of healthcare providers in the following categories: family practice, general practice, internal medicine, paediatrics, and nurse practitioners. Data from 1088 providers who saw patients at or near driving age were included.

Results Family and general practice physicians represented 44.3% of the sample, followed by paediatricians (22.5%), nurse practitioners (17.7%), and internists (15.5%). Nearly all respondents (92.9%) reported addressing one or more crash risk factors (seat belt use, night-time driving, fatigue, teen passengers, alcohol/drug use, speeding/reckless driving, and cell phone use/texting) with adolescent patients and/or their parents. Seat belt use was reported more often (83.7%) than other topics. Paediatricians reported addressing these risk factors more often than other specialties. When communications products were used, written materials such as pamphlets were used more often than other types of products such as posters or videos. Parent-teen driving contracts were reported by less than 10% of respondents.

Significance Most respondents reported addressing key driving safety topics with adolescents and/or their parents. However, parent-teen driving contracts, a known effective intervention, was reported infrequently. This, coupled with the expressed interest in receiving written resource materials, presents an opportunity for future progress.