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Accid Anal Prev. 2004 May;36(3):429-37.

Aggressive driving: an observational study of driver, vehicle, and situational variables.

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Abstract

Over 2000 aggressive driving behaviors were observed over a total of 72 h at six different sites. The behaviors selected for observation were those that are commonly included in "aggressive driving" lists, and they consisted of honking, cutting across one or more lanes in front of other vehicles, and passing on the shoulders. In addition, an exposure sample of 7200 drivers were also observed at the same times and places. Relative risks (RRs) and odds ratios (ODs) were calculated to show the relative likelihood that different drivers under different conditions will commit aggressive behaviors. The rate of aggressive actions observed in this study decreased from the most frequent behavior of cutting across a single lane, through honking, and to the least frequent behaviors of cutting across multiple lanes and passing on the shoulders. Relative to their proportion in the driving population, men were more likely than women to commit aggressive actions, and the differences increased as the severity of the action increased. Drivers who were 45 years old or older were less likely to drive aggressively than younger ones. The presence of passengers was associated with a slight but consistent reduction in aggressive driving of all types; especially honking at other drivers. There was a strong linear association between congestion and the frequency of aggressive behaviors, but it was due to the number of drivers on the road. However, when the value of time was high (as in rush hours), the likelihood of aggressive driving--after adjusting for the number of drivers on the road--was higher than when the value of time was low (during the non-rush weekday or weekend hours). The results have implications for driver behavior modifications and for environmental design.

PMID: 15003588 [PubMed - indexed for MEDLINE]

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