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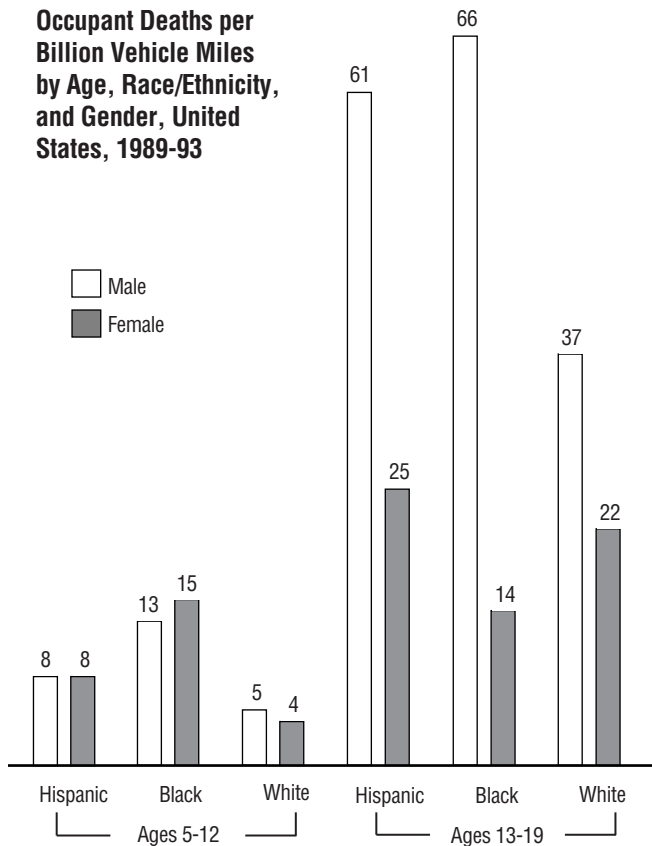
NEWS RELEASE

For Release December 14, 1998 at 3 p.m.

BLACK AND HISPANIC CHILDREN, TEENAGERS ARE AT HIGH RISK OF MOTOR VEHICLE CRASH DEATH

ARLINGTON, VA – Per mile traveled, black and Hispanic male teenagers are nearly twice as likely to die in a motor vehicle crash as male teens who are white. The risk of black children ages 5 to 12 dying in a crash per mile of travel is almost three times as

**Occupant Deaths per
Billion Vehicle Miles
by Age, Race/Ethnicity,
and Gender, United
States, 1989-93**



great as that of white children. Until now, the very high occupant death rates among black and Hispanic male teenagers and black children have been obscured because rates haven't been adjusted for amount of travel. Racial and ethnic differences in car ownership and amount of car travel necessitate such adjustments. The Johns Hopkins School of Public Health's Center for Injury Research and Policy and the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety studied fatal crash risk by race, ethnicity, and gender using national data from several sources.

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Among children 5-12 years old, occupant death rates per billion vehicle miles of travel were 14 for blacks, 8 for Hispanics, and 5 for whites. Among teenagers 13-19, the rates were 45 for Hispanics, 34 for blacks, and 30 for whites. Black and Hispanic male teenagers had the highest death rates — 66 (black) and 61 (Hispanic) deaths per billion vehicle miles of travel. In contrast, population-based death rates, not adjusted for travel, failed to indicate the elevated occupant death risk among black and Hispanic children and teenagers relative to whites.

“Black and Hispanic male teenagers travel in motor vehicles less often than their white male counterparts, but they face a very high risk of dying when they do travel,” says Professor Susan P. Baker of The Johns Hopkins School of Public Health.

Estimates of vehicle miles traveled and numbers of trips for Hispanic, white, and black children and teenagers were derived from the 1990 Nationwide Personal Transportation Survey, which is performed periodically by the U.S. Department of Transportation. Mortality data were obtained from the National Center for Health Statistics for 1989-93. Data from the 1990 census also were used.

Data aren't available to assess why there are racial, ethnic, and gender differences in death rates. But based on other studies reporting lower rates of child restraint and safety belt use among Hispanic and black children and male teenagers, researchers believe differences in restraint use likely play a big part. “Absolute numbers of deaths as well as death rates present an alarming picture for black and Hispanic male teens and black children. We need more resources directed toward increasing their use of belts and child seats,” says Institute senior researcher Elisa R. Braver.

“Motor Vehicle Occupant Deaths among Hispanic and Black Children and Teenagers” appears in the Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine 152:12.

End 2-page release on crash deaths by age, sex, & ethnicity.

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