



# Research in Action

A bimonthly e-newsletter from the Center for Injury Research and Prevention at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

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## New Research Offers Insight on Curbing Teen Driver Cell Phone Use

A study recently released in *Accident Analysis and Prevention* conducted by The Young Driver Research Initiative (YDRI), a research and outreach collaboration of The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) and State Farm Insurance Companies®, found that teens' positive and negative beliefs about not using a cell phone while driving are linked to their likelihood to engage in cell phone use behind the wheel.

According to the findings, teens who say they rarely or never use a cell phone while driving believe the benefits of refraining from cell phone use far outweigh any drawbacks. These benefits include the ability to pay better attention to their driving, less likelihood of crashing, and following the law.

"When it comes to predicting their frequency of cell phone use while driving, the positive beliefs teens have about refraining from this behavior are more powerful than their negative beliefs," says [Jessica Hafetz, PhD](#), the study's lead author.

"Additionally, teens attach more weight to safety-related beliefs over those that are purely social. For instance, the positive belief of paying attention to their driving was more important than the negative beliefs of seeming less social and missing out on gossip or important news." Therefore, teens may respond much better when presented with the benefits of not talking or texting while driving as opposed to hearing about the potential negatives. A positive approach may be best in keeping teens off their phones while driving.

The findings are based on the nationally-representative National Young Driver Survey of more than 5,600 teenagers.

[Read the Press Release](#)

[Watch a Presentation for Educators](#)

[Listen to a Podcast for Parents](#)

## Focus On: Amanda Comeau



Amanda Comeau, a student pursuing a dual BS/MS degree in Biomechanics and Human Performance at Drexel University, has been given the unique opportunity to enhance her studies with hands-on research experience at the Center for Injury Research and Prevention (CIRP) at CHOP.

Comeau joined CIRP's Engineering Core as a co-op student in March 2009 and has worked on several key research projects, beginning with "A Novel Approach to Develop Age-equivalent Models for Pediatric Long Bones" funded by the [Center for Child Injury Prevention Studies \(CChIPS\)](#), part of CIRP. After collaborating on this project with Sriram Balasubramanian, PhD, co-director of CChIPS, Comeau's focus shifted to another CChIPS study, "Structural and Material Characteristics of the Pediatric Thoracic Cage and Their Relationship to Age-related Changes in Thoracic Response." This study became the topic of her Master's thesis, successfully defended in June 2010.

Comeau credits the mentoring nature of the

## Connect Online to 'Ride Like A Friend. Drive Like You Care'

This new social media effort is designed to support and connect school advisors and student leaders executing the 'Ride Like A Friend. Drive Like You Care' (RLAF) program in their schools during [National Teen Driver Safety Week](#) (October 17 to 23, 2010). Participants are encouraged to communicate online to stay on track with project timelines, share project ideas, and post photos, videos, and stories about what schools around the country are doing.

[Click here to join and become a fan of the RLAF Facebook community.](#)

If you don't have a Facebook account, [set one up now.](#)

[Click here to follow RLAF on Twitter](#)

If you don't have a Twitter account, [set one up now.](#)

## National PTA Adds Teen Driver Safety to Its Agenda

During its annual convention held in June, the National Parent Teacher Association (PTA) voted to adopt teen driving safety as one of its national resolutions. The PTA will work to promote educating parents, students, school personnel, and communities regarding the risks associated with teen driving, the legal requirements of Graduated Driver Licensing laws, and the crucial role parents play in helping teens become safe drivers. The PTA will also encourage local, state, and national leaders to support research and adopt policies and legislation to reduce teen driver crashes and the development of consistent quality standards for driver education and training programs.

Also at the convention, [Verna Cole, PhD, MDiv](#), outreach manager for schools at CIRP, talked about Ride Like A Friend. Drive Like You Care, a peer-to-peer program for teen drivers, in an informative podcast aired on the National PTA website.

[Listen to the podcast.](#)

## Center Website Receives Health On the Net Foundation Certification

[teendriversource.org](#), a new website for parents, teens, educators, and policymakers, recently received its code of conduct certification from the Health On the Net (HON) Foundation, a nonprofit organization devoted to helping people find useful and reliable health information on the Internet. [teendriversource.org](#) is an online resource of research-based information and tools created to help teens stay safe on the road.

Center with her successful research experience. "I've really enjoyed my time at CIRP," Comeau says. "I've been able to do applied research in the field I want to pursue and to see projects through from beginning to end. It's also been helpful to be exposed to engineers who have varied concentrations and are always willing to offer their guidance and expertise."

"At CIRP we're training the next generation of injury prevention researchers," says Balasubramanian. "Amanda's work here has not only been a learning experience for her, it's also been rewarding for all of us in the Engineering Core to know we're mentors to Amanda and others as they begin their careers."

Anticipating a graduation date from Drexel in fall 2010, Comeau plans to pursue a career in the medical device industry. She says that her experience at CIRP will serve her well as a professional engineer: "The best part of working here has been being able to collect and analyze data and to be part of such a talented team of people. The confidence I've gained at CIRP makes me excited about the work I'll be doing after I graduate."

[Learn about what other students are doing at CIRP.](#)

## Follow Key Child Injury Prevention Research on Twitter



Stay up-to-date on important child and teenager injury prevention research and news via Twitter with regular postings from our very own "[safetymd](#)",

[Flaura Winston, MD, PhD](#),

co-scientific director at the Center for Injury Research and Prevention at CHOP and a professor at The University of Pennsylvania Medical School. Think of this as your interactive "Headline News" for injury prevention, compiled, reviewed and summarized by one of the leading experts in the field.

As a vital part of their work, Dr. Winston and her colleagues at CIRP scan the literature and the Web for credible, scientific and other noteworthy contributions. Realizing that much

The design and content of this new website was based on input from those with a stake in teen driver safety. The site includes educational resources, statistics, facts, and more to help visitors reach their target audience. [teendriversource.org](http://teendriversource.org) was created as part of the Young Driver Research Initiative (YDRI), a research and outreach alliance of The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Research Institute and State Farm Insurance Companies. Over the next year, the site will add resources and enhanced features to make it as relevant and useful as possible for visitors.

## Join Us in Denver

Two members of the Center for Injury Research and Prevention (CIRP) team will present at the American Public Health Association 138th Annual Meeting and Exposition to be held in Denver November 6 to 10. [Dennis Durbin, MD, MSCE](#), co-director of CIRP, will discuss the association between frequent cell phone use by teen drivers and crash rates, as well as national estimates of formal driver education participation among adolescent drivers. Laurie Bach, a research coordinator in the Behavioral Science Core at CIRP, will talk about improving teen seat belt use through health communication.

The American Public Health Association (APHA) Annual Meeting brings together more than 13,000 physicians, administrators, nurses, educators, researchers, epidemiologists, and related health specialists to address current and emerging health science, policy, and practice issues to promote health and prevent disease. For conference specifics, [click here](#).

For details on these presentations, including abstracts and learning objectives, follow these links:

[Association between frequency of cell phone use while driving and adolescent driver motor vehicle crashes](#)

[National estimates of formal driver education participation among adolescent drivers](#)

[Shifting adolescent and teen health behaviors](#)

## Fein Named Penn Med School Professor



Joel Fein, MD, MPH, director of the [Philadelphia Collaborative Violence Prevention Center \(PCVPC\)](#) and a pediatric emergency physician at CHOP, has been promoted to professor of Pediatrics at The University of Pennsylvania Medical School. "Joel's academic achievements as a clinician, mentor/teacher, and researcher/community advocate are known not only by us, but nationally," says Kathy N. Shaw, MD, MSCE,

of this information is not widely known, Dr. Winston posts summaries, with links to the original abstract or article when available, several times per week to Twitter. "I hope these posts will stimulate thought and discussion and that the scientific foundation for injury prevention will reach those who can affect change," says Dr. Winston. "I also look forward to learning from those who read my posts and share their knowledge and experience with me."

[Click here to follow safetymd](#). Join the injury prevention conversation and stay connected to stakeholders around the world who care about protecting children and teenagers. If you don't have a Twitter account, [set one up now](#).

## In the News

Flaura Winston, MD, PhD, founder and co-director of the Center for Injury Research and Prevention (CIRP) at CHOP and co-author of [AfterTheInjury.org](#), recently discussed how stressful a child's injury can be to the overall health of a family and shared tips on how to help everyone achieve a healthy recovery in this [New York Times feature](#).

Nancy Kassam-Adams, PhD, associate director for Behavioral Research at CIRP and co-author of [AfterTheInjury.org](#), also shared with Reuters how a frightening injury, such as an animal bite, can lead to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in children. [Read the story](#).

## Center Engineer Joins Drexel Faculty

[Sri Balasubramanian, PhD](#), co-director of the Center for Child Injury Prevention Studies (CChIPS) and a member of the Center's Engineering Core, will join Drexel University in Philadelphia as an assistant professor in the Department of Biomedical Engineering, Science and Health System in the fall. A noted lecturer and researcher in biomechanical research and child injury prevention, Balasubramanian will continue to conduct research at the Center, along with his teaching. "Drexel has supported our research efforts at CIRP for quite some time with equipment, software resources, co-op

PSO and associate chair, Department of Pediatrics, Chief Division of Emergency Medicine at CHOP. "We, and the city of Philadelphia, are thrilled to call him our colleague and friend."

Dr. Fein's research interests include violence prevention, mental health, and pain management in children and adolescents. Besides his work at CIRP and CHOP, Dr. Fein also chairs the board of directors of the Institute for Safe Families and is on the board of the Philadelphia Anti-Drug Anti-Violence Network.

## Recent Center Publications

- Diamond G, Levy S, Bevans KB, Fein JA, Wintersteen MB, Tien A, Creed T. [Development, Validation, and Utility of Internet-Based, Behavioral Health Screen for Adolescents](#). *Pediatrics*. July 2010.
- Hafetz JS, Jacobsohn LS, Garcia-Espana FJ, Curry AE, and Winston FK. [Adolescent Drivers' Perceptions of the Advantages and Disadvantages of Abstention from In-vehicle Cell Phone Use](#) *Accident Analysis and Prevention*. June 30, 2010
- MacDonald J, Golinelli D, Stokes RJ, Bluthenthal R. [The Effect of Business Improvement Districts On the Incidence of Violent Crimes](#). *Injury Prevention*. Published online June 29, 2010.
- Nance BG, Carr BG, Kallan MJ, Branas CC, and Wiebe DJ. [Variation in Pediatric and Adolescent Firearm Mortality Rates in Rural and Urban US Counties](#). *Pediatrics*. June 2010.

## Recent Center Presentations

- Arbogast K, Tanji H, Higuchi K, Kent R. [A Methodology to Obtain Kinematic Corridors for Pediatric Occupants in Frontal Impacts](#). 6th World Congress on Biomechanics. Singapore. August 6, 2010.
- Arbogast K, Locey C, Wozniak S, Maltese M, Van Ratingen M, and Yonezawa H. [Thoracic Biomechanics of Pediatric ATD's in Full-Scale Side Impact Crashes](#). 6th World Congress on Biomechanics. Singapore. August 6, 2010.
- Balasubramanian S, Thallner B, Garcia-Espana F, Zemel B, Schaer T, and Arbogast K. [Structural and Material Measures of Pediatric Human and Immature Porcine Tibia](#). 6th World Congress on Biomechanics. Singapore. August 4, 2010.
- Balasubramanian S, Comeau A, Seacrist T, Maltese M, Servaes S, and Arbogast K. [Age-related Changes in Geometric Characteristics of the Pediatric Thoracic Cage](#). 6th World Congress on Biomechanics. Singapore. August 5, 2010
- Cole Verna. [Ride Like A Friend. Drive Like You Care](#). National Association of Student Councils (NASC) Annual

students, and other collaborations," says Kristy Arbogast, PhD, director of the Engineering Core at CIRP." Dr. Balasubramanian's appointment helps to formalize this already successful partnership."



Sri Balasubramanian, PhD

## Teacher Awarded NSF Grant for Teen Driver Safety

With a Research Experience for Teachers (RET) supplemental opportunity grant from the National Science Foundation, Tim Callahan, a teacher at Radnor Middle School in Radnor, PA, is working with CIRP's Outreach and Advocacy team to develop educational materials to train public health advocates and teachers in sharing teen driver safety resources and knowledge with parents, teens, and others. Callahan brings his knowledge of what works in the classroom to the Young Driver Research Initiative.

The RET program supports the active involvement of K-12 teachers and community college faculty in scientific research to bring this knowledge and technological innovation into their classrooms. If you are interested in an RET position for next summer, please contact CIRP's Director of Training, Dr. Meghan Marsac at [marsac@email.chop.edu](mailto:marsac@email.chop.edu).

[Read the Main Line Times article](#)



Tim Callahan

Conference. Indianapolis, IN. June 28, 2010.

- Comeau A. Age-related Changes in Geometric Characteristics of the Pediatric Thoracic Cage and Comparison of Thorax Shape with a Pediatric CPR Manikin. Master's Thesis. Drexel University. Philadelphia, PA. June 24, 2010.
- Kent R, Lopez-Valdes F, Forman J, Dennis N, Arbogast K, Seacrist T, Balasubramanian S, Higuchi K, and Hiromasa T. 5 An Inflatable Belt System in the Rear Seat Occupant Environment: Preliminary Findings from a Series of PMHS Sled Tests. 6th World Congress on Biomechanics. Singapore. August 5, 2010.
- Lopez-Valdes FJ, Seacrist T, Balasubramanian S, Maltese M, Arbogast K, Tanji H, Higuchi K, and Kent R. A Methodology to Obtain Kinematic Corridors for Pediatric Occupants in Frontal Impacts. 6th World Congress on Biomechanics. Singapore. August 6, 2010 .
- Seacrist T, Balasubramanian S, Garcia-Espana F, Lopez-Valdes FJ, Kent R, Hiromasa T, Higuchi K, Maltese M, and Arbogast K. Dynamic Response of the Hybrid III 6 Year Old ATD Compared to Size-Matched Pediatric Volunteers in Low-Speed Frontal Sled Tests. 6th World Congress on Biomechanics. Singapore. August 5, 2010.

## The Center's Websites

- The Center for Injury Research and Prevention ([www.chop.edu/injury](http://www.chop.edu/injury))
- Keeping Kids Safe in Crashes-English language – English language ([www.chop.edu/carseat](http://www.chop.edu/carseat))
- Cómo Mantener a los Niños Fuera de Peligro Durante los Choques – Spanish language ([www.chop.edu/asientos\\_infantiles](http://www.chop.edu/asientos_infantiles))
- Philadelphia Collaborative Violence Prevention Center (PCVPC) ([injury.research.chop.edu/pcvpc](http://injury.research.chop.edu/pcvpc))
- After The Injury: Helping Parents Help Their Kids Recover ([www.AfterTheInjury.org](http://www.AfterTheInjury.org))
- teendriversource.org ([www.teendriversource.org](http://www.teendriversource.org))