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TITLE: Educational Approaches to Driver Improvement: An Experimental Evaluation with Negligent Drivers

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PROTECT OBTECTIVE:

To develop a group driver-improvement program that is more effective in reduction of accident/conviction rates and more cost-beneficial than the standard Group Educational Meeting (GEM).

SUMMARY:

A total of 17,662 negligent operators were randomly assigned to one of six programs or to a control group. One treatment was the Group Educational Meeting (GEM), three were modifications of the GEM, and two treatments were non-classroom programmed-learning techniques. One of the non-classroom programs provided an incentive for return of the homework and maintenance of a clean driving record.

Driving records were inspected for accidents and convictions during the year after treatment. Only the non-classroom homework-with-incentive program showed significantly fewer accidents than the control, and that reduction was restricted to the second six months after treatment. When data from additional GEM and control samples were combined with the original data, the GEM's accident rate was significantly below the control rate during the first six months, indicating that it was effective as an accident countermeasure. None of the experimental classroom programs were significantly (or even directionally) superior to the GEM in reducing accidents or convictions during the first six months. All treatments except the non-classroom homework without incentive were effective in reducing subsequent convictions.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The GEM was retained as the intermediate negligent operator treatment between warning letter and individual hearing. The department discontinued the use of the mandatory GEM notice which resulted in the suspension of drivers who failed to appear at GEMs.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

None.