



Women Vs. Men: Who Really are Better Drivers?

“Women drivers!” It’s a road refrain oft uttered by men. On the other hand, in this age of statistics it’s typically countered with the claim that men are actually involved in more accidents. And scientific data is very compelling. But what is the truth?

Speaking of science, a recently issued study found that “women are twice as likely to hit the gas by mistake.” I witnessed an example of this myself years ago. Emerging from a former workplace one day, I found an automobile wedged on a concrete parking stop; the front tires were dangling over it helplessly, which matched the way the driver, a gal of approximately 22, was looking on. Of course, I also know of a case in which a fellow did the same thing. He was a 12-year-old boy who, after being allowed by his parents to pull the family car into the garage, provided some extra ventilation.

This is a good reason why you shouldn’t send a boy to do a man’s job, but should driving really be a woman’s job? If we’re to believe standard reportage, we might certainly think so.

For example, while reporting on the study on “peddle misapplication errors” earlier cited, commentator David Paulin [writes](#), “[T]he NHTSA...noted that ‘males of all ages accounted for 61 percent of all vehicle crashes and females 33 percent (where sex was reported).’ Also, men are three times more likely than women to be killed in crashes. All of which highlights the dangers of making generalizations about driving skills....”

With all due respect to Mr. Paulin, all this highlights are the dangers of failing to dig more deeply into statistics.

The clue in the above quotation is the word “accounted.” The reason why it was used and not the phrase “men have a higher rate” is simple: Men account for more vehicle crashes only because they drive considerably more — 60 to 65 percent more. Per million miles driven, however, [men are involved](#) in markedly *fewer* accidents.

The only exception to this is newly minted drivers, but even here the landscape has changed. Where fresh-faced lads were once more likely to have crack-ups, the lasses [have now achieved](#) an unenviable equality and closed the gap. This is partially due to teen girls’ far greater susceptibility to [distraction on the road](#).

What is true, however, is that men are more likely to die in vehicle crashes, but, again, closer examination lends some perspective. To state the fairly obvious, men are more apt to be involved in major accidents, and this is partially due to their greater tendency to drive under the influence of alcohol and drugs. Yet it’s also a fact that men are more likely to do highway driving, where the speeds are higher and thus impacts greater. Moreover, virtually all motorcycle drivers are male — and fender benders are bone benders on a bike.

The lesson here is that we have to be wary when statistics are used as sound bites. Saying that a woman only makes (it should be “earns”) 77 cents on a man’s dollar is great for political persuasion and posturing, but it doesn’t reveal that the reason for this gap is the sexes’ [different lifestyle and career choices](#). Likewise, claiming that 13 children a day die from gunshots is good for killing the Second Amendment, but seldom are people told that the statistic includes “children” up to the ages of 19 to 24 (depending on the source), many of whom are thugs killed in gang-related activity.

Of course, since insurance companies only care about raw statistics, we fellows shouldn’t think an auto-coverage reduction is in the offing. The insurance man only cares about how much you cost his



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on April 30, 2012

company, not why. We should be mindful of this when hearing [propaganda](#) about the supposed injustice of women's higher health-insurance rates and calls to outlaw such disparities. Actuarial tables only discriminate based on reality — and their chromosome-blind judgments cut both ways.

By the way, since we're breaking this down based on group, I'll point out that the drivers with the lowest accident rate are men between the ages of 40 and 60. And I'm sure we could break it down based on race, as well, but, not surprisingly, finding such statistics isn't easy. Something tells me that the media wouldn't want that kind of data in the public eye.



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