

Changing driver behaviour using volitional interventions

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Many drivers commit driving violations in spite of generally 'good' attitudes and intentions from a road safety point of view (Elliott & Armitage, 2006). This research was designed to test the extent to which volitional interventions based on Gollwitzer's (1993) concept of implementation intentions could help convert these good intentions into safer road use. A series of field and laboratory randomised controlled studies were conducted. In all studies, the participants were randomised to a volitional intervention (implementation intention) condition or a control condition. Baseline and follow-up measures of attitudes, intentions and speeding behaviour were collected using self-reports and objective indices of behaviour. Intervention participants subsequently reported exceeding the speed limit to a lesser extent than did control participants (studies 1 and 2) and subsequently drove slower on a driving simulator (study 3). Participants exceeded the speed limit less often in driving situations targeted by the interventions and in situations contextually similar situations. Volitional interventions based on Gollwitzer's (1993) concept of implementation intentions are effective at reducing speeding and converting desirable attitudes and intentions into safer road use. These interventions show a classic stimulus generalisation effect, meaning that their beneficial impacts on behaviour-change extend beyond the driving situations that they target. Volitional interventions have potential to increase the effectiveness of driver education and training interventions, maximising their capacity to achieve road safety outcomes (desirable behaviour-change and concordant reductions in traffic-crashes). Further research is needed to test the effects of volitional interventions on a wider range of driving behaviours.