

## OUTSTANDING RESEARCH POSTER

**Beck, K., Fell, J., & Fan, A.:** A comparison of drivers with high vs. low perceived risk of being caught for driving under the influence of alcohol.

### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** To examine the beliefs, behaviors and knowledge of drivers concerning drunk driving and to compare those with greater or lesser perceptions of risk of being caught driving while impaired. **Methods:** A random digit-dial telephone survey was conducted of 850 licensed drivers throughout Maryland who reported their driving behaviors, crash history, driver dispositions, beliefs about various alcohol countermeasures and their knowledge of state alcohol laws. **Results:** Most drivers (72%) did not feel it was very likely that they would be stopped by the police if they drove after having too much to drink (low risk perceivers). High risk perceivers (the other 28%) felt it was very likely that they would be stopped. Most high risk perceivers (70%) felt it was very likely that they would be arrested and convicted, while less than half (45%) of the low risk perceivers felt they would be arrested and convicted if they drove impaired. High risk perceivers were significantly more likely to be non-white, less likely to drive 10 mph above the speed limit, had fewer crashes, were more courteous when they drive, were more likely to believe that sobriety checkpoints were effective and favored a variety of impaired driving countermeasures. High risk perceivers were also more aware of laws regarding mandatory use of ignition interlocks for repeat driving under the influence (DUI) offenders. **Conclusions:** There is a need to elevate perceptions of the risks of being caught when driving while impaired. Despite several years of impaired driving prevention programs, a substantial portion of Maryland drivers do not feel it very likely that they would be stopped by the police if they were to drive after drinking too much. Drivers who perceive these legal risks are better informed, more accepting of enforcement and treatment countermeasures and are more likely to report safer driving behaviors.