



THE UNIVERSITY
of ADELAIDE

MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS AND ROAD CRASHES

Mental health disorders can have a devastating effect on day-to-day functioning, including a negative impact on driving capacity and fitness to drive.

Why consider mental health in road safety?

- Mental health disorders continue to be on the increase and therefore more road users are likely to be using the public road network while experiencing a mental health disorder.
- We know that mental health disorders can have a detrimental impact on cognitive functioning, including the brain functions that are required to drive safely.
- Research indicates that there is an increased risk of having a crash associated with some mental health disorders.
- The contribution of pre-existing mental health disorders on crash causation requires further research.

What we have found

- Data from rural crashes in South Australia between 2014-15 showed that 28% of fatalities had some indication they were experiencing a mental health condition.
- 46% of at-fault road users in fatal rural crashes with mental health indicators were also positive for drugs/illegal BAC.

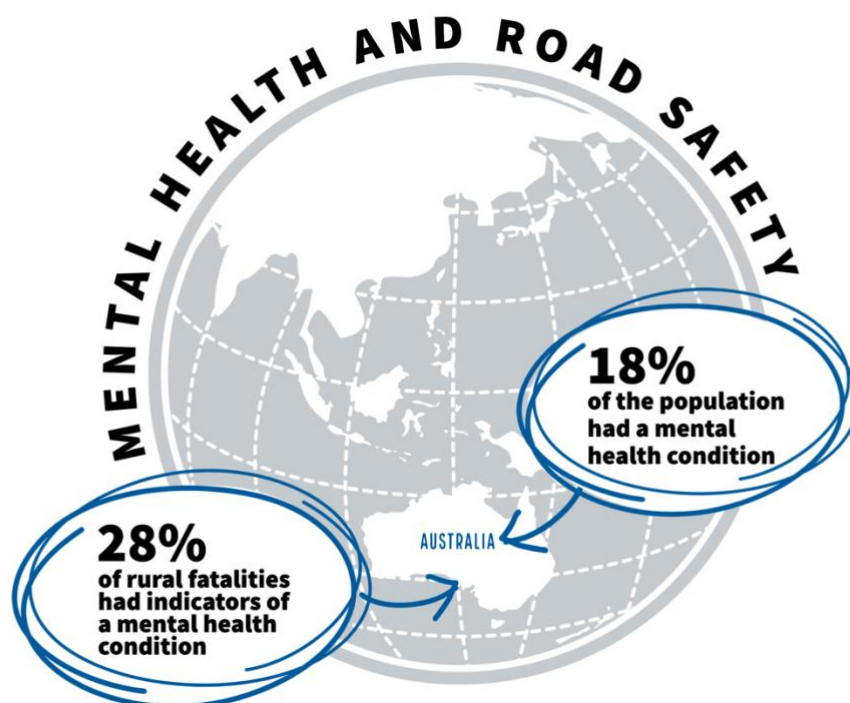
What we are doing

Mental health and road safety research led by a team of human factors experts, including a clinical psychologist, with a focus on the following:

- In-depth discussions with individuals involved in injury crashes to investigate mental health functioning pre-and-post crash.
- Analysis of hospital data from serious injury crash participants to understand the prevalence of pre-existing mental health conditions.

Further research

- Improve our understanding of the contribution of mental health disorders on crash causation, including, exploration of impediments faced by practitioner assessment of mental health in fitness to drive decisions.
- Undertake longitudinal research to understand the impact of mental health disorders pre-and-post crash and the consequent impact on road safety.
- Investigate innovative therapeutic approaches in supporting the mental health and well-being of road users post-crash.



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