

Evidence for the value of driving instructors

Dr Charles Johnson

CAS

221 St John Street, London, UK EC1V4LY

Tel: +44 2076882840

Email: Charles.johnson@casolutions.co.uk

The theme for this year's CIECA Congress makes a very clear assumption that driving instructors add value to the learning to drive process. This assumption is clearly recognised in the EU Commission's (2010) document *Towards a European road safety area: policy orientations on road safety 2010-20120* where the importance of education and training is emphasised. However, the assumption has been challenged by a number of researchers and authors. For example, CIECA members will remember at the Dublin Congress in 2014, the keynote speaker, Professor Frank McKenna, re-iterated a claim he and others have made several times in the past, namely that there is little evidence supporting the assumption. This is in opposition to the perceptions of the many practitioners and experts in the driving instruction sector who are convinced that driving instruction makes a significant and valuable contribution to safe and responsible driving. This view is well captured in the 2015 report of the Norwegian Public Roads Authority, *Evaluation of driver training in Norway after 2005*, where it is concluded that the Norwegian driver training programme has been a "*positive development in terms of both accident proneness and attitudes*". The report also notes, however, how difficult it is to measure the impact of training measures because several measures of different sorts (e.g. legislative, technical, changes to the driving test, etc.) are often implemented simultaneously and that control groups are difficult to find.

With these points in mind, and as a backdrop to the Congress theme, this presentation will provide evidence relating to the impact of driving instruction on driver performance and driver safety. The analyses are based on two large data sets from the UK which have been referenced before in CIECA Congress presentations but these analyses present a range of findings that have not been reported before relating how and where drivers learnt to drive with their self-reported accident and conviction record. The findings are quite clear cut. Sizeable effects are apparent for a range of training factors with such behaviours as crash rates, speeding offences and convictions for dangerous driving.