

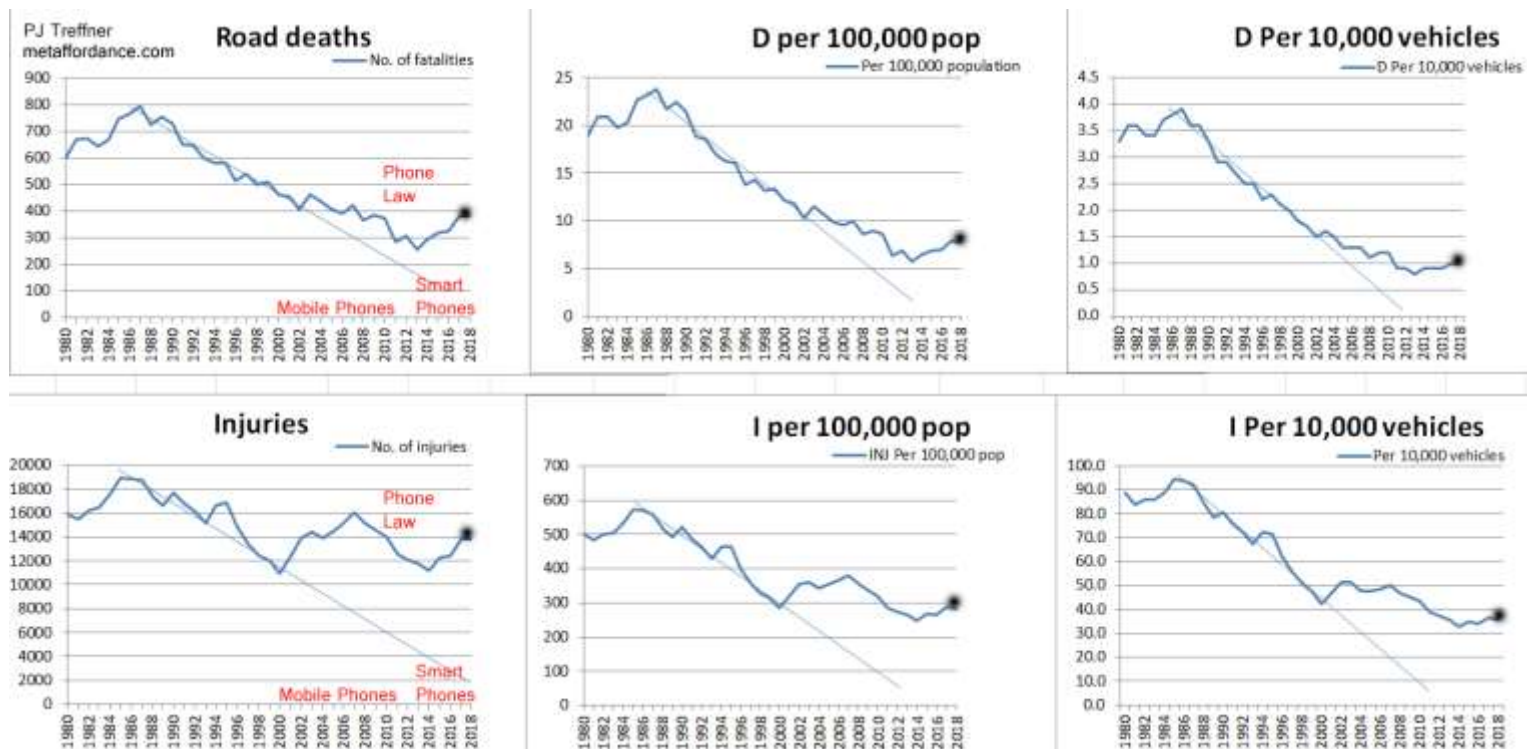
The relation of mobile phone availability to crash statistics in New Zealand (1990-2018)

Dr. Paul J. Treffner

The trend since the 1990s in many countries (e.g., [OECD](#)) has been for a continual reduction in road casualties. However, this continual drop seems to have stopped in New Zealand. Why is this?

A re-analysis of NZTA data on road fatalities and injuries from 1990 to November 2018 reveals that there is a relation between the widespread availability of personal mobile phones beginning around 2000 (increased casualties), the introduction of NZ mobile phone laws in November 2009 (a decrease in casualties), and the widespread availability and adoption of new *smartphone* technology in 2013 (a sharp increase in casualties).

The increase in road deaths and injuries seen since the minimum in 2013 may be due to the widespread availability and use of hands-held smartphones (especially texting) despite laws prohibiting such activity while driving. The potentially dramatic and destabilising influence of communication on driving is concerning (Treffner et al., 2002, 2004, 2008). A re-evaluation of mobile phone use penalties would be prudent if NZ is to see a continued reduction in road trauma as seen in other countries. (Full article [HERE](#)).



References

- Treffner, P. J., & Barrett, R. (2004). Hands-free mobile phone speech while driving degrades coordination and control. *Transportation Research, Part F: Traffic Psychology and Behaviour*, 7, 229-246. [Video](#).
- Treffner, P. J., Barrett, R., & Petersen, A. J. (2002). Stability and skill in driving. *Human Movement Science*, 21, 749-784. [Video](#).
- Treffner, P. J., & Peter, M. (2002). Intentional and attentional dynamics of speech-hand coordination. *Human Movement Science*, 21, 641-697.
- Treffner, P. J., Peter, M., & Kleidon, M. (2008). Gestures and phases: The dynamics of speech-hand communication. *Ecological Psychology*, 20, 32-64. [Video](#).

Full article at: [Metaffordance.com](#), [LinkedIn](#), [DriveDoctor](#)