The EU BestPoint project: Getting the best out of a demerit point system

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Demerit Point Systems (DPS)

- complement traditional police enforcement by taking into account repeat offenders

- have three main aims:
  - Deterrence
  - Selection
  - Correction (SWOV, 2008)
The EU BestPoint project

Objectives:

Collect

Analyse

Summarise

Best Practices for Demerit Point Systems (DPS)

Disseminate

Partner:

Dr. Simone Klipp
Final outcome:
A Handbook (www.bestpoint-project.eu)

- recommending practices for designing and implementing a DPS
  - Offences & points, user groups, thresholds
  - Intermediate measures
  - Rehabilitation measures
  - Administrative and organisational issues

- targeted at
  - Member States’ authorities: setting up, modifying, reviewing their DPS
  - EU institutions
### Safety effects of DPS

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<tr>
<th>Evaluation method</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Scientific article or report</th>
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<td>Simple before-and-after</td>
<td>AE</td>
<td>Mehmood (2010)</td>
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<td>Poli De Figueiredo et al. (2001)</td>
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<td>Simple before-and-after with some control</td>
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<td>Butler et al. (2005), Hussain et al. (2006),</td>
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<td>Quasi-experimental</td>
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<td>Chipman and Morgan (1975)</td>
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<td>Castillo-Manzano et al. (2010), Pulido et al.</td>
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<td>Rådet for Større Færdssiksikkerhed (2005)</td>
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**Majority of studies report positive effects of DPS, but only for a limited time period**

**Meta-analysis (Castillo-Manzano & Castro-Nuno, 2012):**
- 15 to 20% reductions in crashes, fatalities and injuries
- Impact seems to wear off in under eighteen months
Offences to include in DPS

1. Speeding (exceeding the legal speed limit)
2. Driving under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs
3. Violation of rules on seatbelt wearing, helmet wearing (powered two-wheelers) and proper use of child restraints
4. Red light running
5. Violation of priority rules
6. Dangerous overtaking
7. Violating rules on minimum headway between vehicles
8. Endangering pedestrians at zebra crossings
9. Illegal use of mobile phones or other communication devices
10. Disobeying rules for road users at railway level crossings
11. Wrong way driving (on dual carriageway roads) and use of forbidden lanes
12. Hit and run – and other dangerous post-accident misbehaviour
Target groups of DPS

- Focus on holders of driving licences
- Apply special conditions for novice drivers
- Consider offences of professional drivers
- Assess “Repeat recidivists”, alcohol and drug offenders for underlying problems
Enforcement levels and methods

- Enforcement is key to success of DPS
- Automatic camera enforcement and random breath testing
- Points to be assigned to the driver – if unfeasible, to the owner
- Communication about enforcement to increase the subjective chance of getting caught
- Public information on safety effects, rule compliance and violations
Intermediate measures

Four-step approach:

1. Information and warning letters
2. Driver improvement course focussing on attitudinal and behavioural change rather than on increase of knowledge & skills
3. Licence withdrawal for a period of between 3 and 12 months
4. Rehabilitation course. For severe cases consider medical-psychological examination and behavioural assistance & monitoring
Organisation, administration, monitoring

- Central register
- Simple, clear, fast and largely automated administrative procedures
- Easy access for offenders to point status, e.g. via internet
- Regular (daily?) statistics
Towards an EU-wide DPS

Five steps:
1. Voluntary information exchange between countries on offences
2. EC Recommendation to adopt DPS based on BestPoint guidelines
3. Virtual national driving licence for non-residents
4. Every MS has DPS with minimum list of offences; conversion table
5. Long-term: one single DPS at EU level + intermediate & rehabilitation measures
Discussion

- European DPSs are very different, and there is yet no harmonisation or connection.
- BestPoint project provides for the initial steps towards a cross-country European DPS.
- Australian jurisdictions already have sophisticated DPS schemes, but:
  - no driver rehabilitation for “point” offenders
  - structural interventions preferred

System improvements with a combination of structural and individual interventions?
Thank you for your attention!

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