

Driving Away Our Health: Findings at a Glance

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Human Impact Partners (HIP), in collaboration with Gig Workers Rising, conducted a health impacts study to examine the ways that driving for a ride-hail company like Lyft or Uber affects someone's health and well-being. Our research comes from data we gathered from talking with ride-hail drivers in Northern California, interviews with occupational health and economics experts, and existing literature on economic security and the ride-hail and taxi industries.

The Economic Insecurity of Ride-Hail Driving is an Emerging Public Health Issue

Income is a key predictor of health. We need economic security to thrive, successfully manage stress, and prevent disease. A family's income directly impacts their ability to meet their basic needs. Jobs that don't offer livable wages force families to choose between paying rent, buying healthy foods, or seeking health care.

The unpredictability of ride-hail driving fuels economic insecurity, which is bad for health. Lyft and Uber maintain a constantly shifting dynamic for drivers as the companies decrease driver earnings per ride, add new drivers to their platforms, and eliminate the promise of flexibility in when and where to drive. As a result, drivers live in a state of chronic stress, driving for low pay with unpredictable earnings and a lack of control while driving.

Because you don't have the time to stop and do what you know you're supposed to do... So do I be healthy and take care of me?... Do I take my breaks?... Or do I chase that dollar? A lot of times, one gets pitted against another. — Juan

Working for an algorithm takes a toll. Drivers in our focus groups shared the psychological toll of working for an app. If something arises in their workplace, they have no recourse or ability to talk with a co-worker or supervisor. Research has found that social support is key to health, and that being isolated from other people increases the risk of dying early and developing certain diseases.

Long workdays behind the wheel harm health. Studies of taxi drivers have found that prolonged sitting while driving creates musculoskeletal disorders and chronic pain. Drivers in our focus groups told us how the sedentary nature of the job was causing them pain throughout their whole bodies, and they also shared how this has worsened overtime. Now that the ride-hail companies have decreased drivers' income, workers are in the car for 60 to 70 hours per week, exacerbating negative health consequences from driving.

Recommendations to Protect Workplace Health and Safety

We recommend policy solutions that deliver stability, predictability, and dignity for workers, which will reverberate in positive health impacts for them and our society as a whole:

- Establish a livable wage floor to increase and stabilize driver income
- Increase job control and fare transparency
- Provide health benefits

Visit HumanImpact.org/DrivingAwayHealth to view references and read the full report.