Rehabilitation of drunken drivers in the Federal Republic of Germany

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Programs for novice drivers
The program is implemented as part of the provisions for the probationary driving licencing of novice drivers, and officially introduced on November 1, 1986. Under this law drivers will have to prove their competence behind the wheel by not causing an accident or violating traffic regulations for two years after their licence was issued. This two-year period is only passed, if the novice driver does not commit a serious offence in that time. Prevention is an essential characteristic of the probationary driving licence system.

A novice driver committing traffic offences in the first two years after getting his licence is suspected of shortcomings in his competence as driver or a dangerous degree of risk acceptance, or both and requiring corrective measures. The improvement program aims at gradually reducing individual shortcomings and also the high number of accidents caused by this target group. Young novices have to be made aware of their shortcomings. At the same time they need assistance in finding their way to safe and responsible driving. Driver improvement programs contain six to twelve participants. Program leaders are specially qualified and experienced driving instructors.

Novice drivers committing drinking and driving offences in the period of probation represent a specific target group. A special alcohol safety program has been designed for them, dealing exclusively with the drinking and driving problem to help participants comprehend what is involved and to acquire modes of behaviour that avoid drinking and driving in the future. Special programs of this nature require specially qualified program leaders. That is why driving instructors are not employed in this case but trained psychologists who are familiar with the drinking and driving problem and experienced in conducting programs of this nature. The results so far are quite promising [4,5,6,7,8].

Rehabilitation programs for first-time drinking and driving offenders
The objective of these programs, which were introduced in 1978, is to supplement the general preventive effect of fines and licence revocation. The programs aim at changing drinking and driving. In addition, the participants are motivated to prove that they have succeeded in overcoming their uncontrolled drinking because the certificate awarded after the program can have positive legal consequences for the participant; in particular a reduction in the period of licence revocation [1,2,9].
At present there are four different program models available, based on the behaviouristic and the individual approaches, and eclectic models based on group dynamics (Table 1). The programs are run by traffic psychologists specially trained for this task, and subject to continuing training [1,2].

The programs for first-time drinking and driving offenders have steadily increased in number, though at different rates in the various regions. In previous years about 4,000 first-time offenders attended such programs each year, which is very low compared with the total of 140,000 first-time drinking and driving offenders caught annually.

In the intervening time much has been published about the extent to which courts take program participation into account in assessing the driving competence of a drinking and driving offender [9,10,11,12,13,14,15]. There appears at present to be a tendency towards attaching more weight to the certificate of program participation. This is also reflected in efforts made by the federal states to encourage a larger number of persons to take part in programs by paving the way for legislation reducing the minimum legal period of licence revocation. In this regard it should be pointed out that judges, according to German law, are expressly obliged to protect the public from drunk drivers, which is best ensured by licence revocation. In that sense, a driver rehabilitation program can only be regarded as an additional safety measure [13,14].

The data which are available from regional evaluation studies already reveal a clear reduction in the relapse frequency of program participants compared with the general relapse probability of first-time offenders within the 24 months observation period [4,5,6,7,8]. Previous experience has shown that the quality of programs depends heavily on the quality of program leader training and on how correctly the suitability of offenders for program participation is assessed [1,2,7,16] (Table 1).
Table 1: Structure, organization and distribution of rehabilitation programs for first-time drinking and driving offenders in the Federal Republic of Germany

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program model</th>
<th>Sponsor / Organizer</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Methods</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ALFA</strong></td>
<td>Gesellschaft für Ausbildung, Fortbildung und Nachschulung im Straßenverkehr, Köln</td>
<td>entrance examination and four sessions of 120 minutes each over a period of four weeks</td>
<td>approx. 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hamburg '79</strong></td>
<td>Institut für Gruppenforschung, Hamburg</td>
<td>entrance examination, two sessions per week in all 21 sessions of 45 minutes each</td>
<td>8 - 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEER-E</strong></td>
<td>Technischer Überwachungsverein, Hannover; Technischer Überwachungsverein Bayern</td>
<td>entrance examination, six group sessions of two hours each, follow-up sessions (two hours) and further contact by correspondence, in all two years</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mainz '77</strong></td>
<td>various TÜVs (technical inspection agencies)</td>
<td>entrance examination, 6 x 2 session periods over a period of three weeks</td>
<td>8 - 10</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Rehabilitation programs for drivers with several drinking and driving convictions

A certificate testifying to successful participation in a program can lead to a driver having his licence returned when he lost it by a drinking and driving offence.

This procedure has been decreed by the highest federal state authorities and its legality has been confirmed by the administrative courts [2,17]. Participation in an improvement program for drivers with several previous drinking and driving offences is restricted by the assignment criteria decreed by the highest federal state authorities. In general a driver may be admitted to a program who after two previous drunken driving convictions and expiration of the revocation period has provided a medical and psychological report attesting his shortcomings as a driver but believing that these could be corrected in a specific driver improvement program.

In the meantime, the decrees of the various federal states also name the institutions which are officially approved driver improvement centers, including admission criteria and assignment procedures, the program models implemented in a particular state, form and contents of the certificate testifying program participation, and their legal status as far as the traffic authorities dealing with these cases are concerned.

In addition to the incorporation of the programs into the existing administrative system and their positive effects on licence renewal, the success of improvement measures is mainly due to their content, organization and supervision [1,2,17] (Table 2).
Table 2: Structure, organization and distribution of rehabilitation programs for drivers with several previous drinking and driving convictions in the Federal Republic of Germany

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program model</th>
<th>Sponsor / Organizer</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>No. of participants</th>
<th>Methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual approach</td>
<td>Gesellschaft für Ausbildung, Fortbildung und Nachschulung im Straßenverkehr e.V., Köln; Technischer Überwachungsverein Rheinland</td>
<td>13 double periods (6.5 hours of session over four weekends) distributed over a period of four or seven weeks</td>
<td>10 at most</td>
<td>life-style analysis; group discussions; information on the risks inherent in alcohol consumption; task sheets; information material; homework</td>
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<tr>
<td>Behaviouristic</td>
<td>various TÜVs (technical inspection agencies)</td>
<td>four-week period of self-observation and registration; six sessions (in all 14 h);</td>
<td>8 at most</td>
<td>group discussions combined with role-playing; analysis of behaviour; setting up individual behavioural targets; self-observation and control measures and exercises; homework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEER-model</td>
<td>various TÜVs (technical inspection agencies)</td>
<td>12-week period of self-observation and control; follow-up survey a year after program completion; final session (2 h) two years after program completion</td>
<td>8 at most</td>
<td>group discussions; analysis of drinking behaviour; information on drinking and road safety; self-observation and control measures and exercises; methods to modify behaviour; homework</td>
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</table>
Results of evaluation studies
Due to intensive teamwork in small groups, all three program models for drivers with previous drinking and driving offences (individual approach, behaviouristic approach, LEER model) have been successful. They all succeed in redirecting driver motives for participation, which are often superficial at the initial stage, and helping them accept the chance to solve their personal and drinking problems. These changes obtained include:

- drinking habits
- control of alcohol consumption
- avoidance of occasions when alcohol will be consumed
- critical self-assessment of one's driving ability

[1,2,17].

In addition, rehabilitation programs also produce a clear reduction in the relapse frequency, confirmed by a monitoring period of 36 months following the program participation. The program participants who had received unfavourable medical and psychological reports displayed a clearly better relapse rate (13%) than the drivers in the control group (18%) with the better medical and psychological rating [17]. The final assessment of the success of the rehabilitation programs (monitoring period: 60 months) revealed the program to be successful: in the experimental group (program participants) 21% recidivists were found, in the control group (non participants) 27%. Differences between the three program models were not observed [17,18].

Discussion
Driver improvement and rehabilitation programs can already be considered as making an important and irreplaceable contribution to the road safety work in the Federal Republic of Germany. They can however not be a substitution for legal sanctions and measures.

Present efforts in the Federal Republic of Germany towards a more systematic linkage between road safety education, driver training and examination, safety training and driver improvement and rehabilitation programs and their integration into the existing legal, administrative and organizational framework appear to be more promising road safety efforts in the medium term than demands for radical changes in the legislation relating to the punishment of drivers or the search for alternatives to licence suspension or revocation.

References
15 Zabel, GE (Hrsg.) Verkehrsförderforum "Nachschulung von Alkoholtätern". St. Ingbert 1981.