

The safety of people who drive for work in the gig economy: A perfect storm of risk factors?

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What is the gig economy?

The gig economy involves people who do not get paid a salary but get paid per gig or a 'piece rate' whereby service providers are linked to service users via an app.

Our study:

- How is safety taken onto account in driving, riding or cycling for work
- 48 in depth interviews with drivers, riders and their managers
- Online survey – over 200 responses



Reported here: *Christie, N., & Ward, H. (2019). The health and safety risks for people who drive for work in the gig economy. Journal of Transport and Health. doi:10.1016/j.jth.2019.02.007*

Safety management

INTERVIEWS:

- Companies interested in 'the life of a parcel than the person delivering it'
- Virtually no training given
- No safety equipment given
- Disregard of safety

SURVEY:

- No safety training
- No safety equipment such as a high visibility vest
- Company does not care about their safety whilst working
- Responsibility should be shared

Fatigue

INTERVIEWS:

- Mentally and physically fatigued
- Worked for multiple courier companies some working three weeks of 12 hour days without a break
 - One cyclist reported falling a sleep on her bike and subsequently crashed
 - One driver had to slap his face to keep awake and travelled at 'only' 50 mph on the motorway to limit any damage if he crashed
 - Some taxi drivers had long commutes (2 hours) to get in to London to work

SURVEY:

- 16% experienced severe fatigue e.g. struggling to stay awake



Distraction

INTERVIEWS:

- Handled their phone whilst riding to accept jobs
- The app beeping at them to announce jobs was a distraction



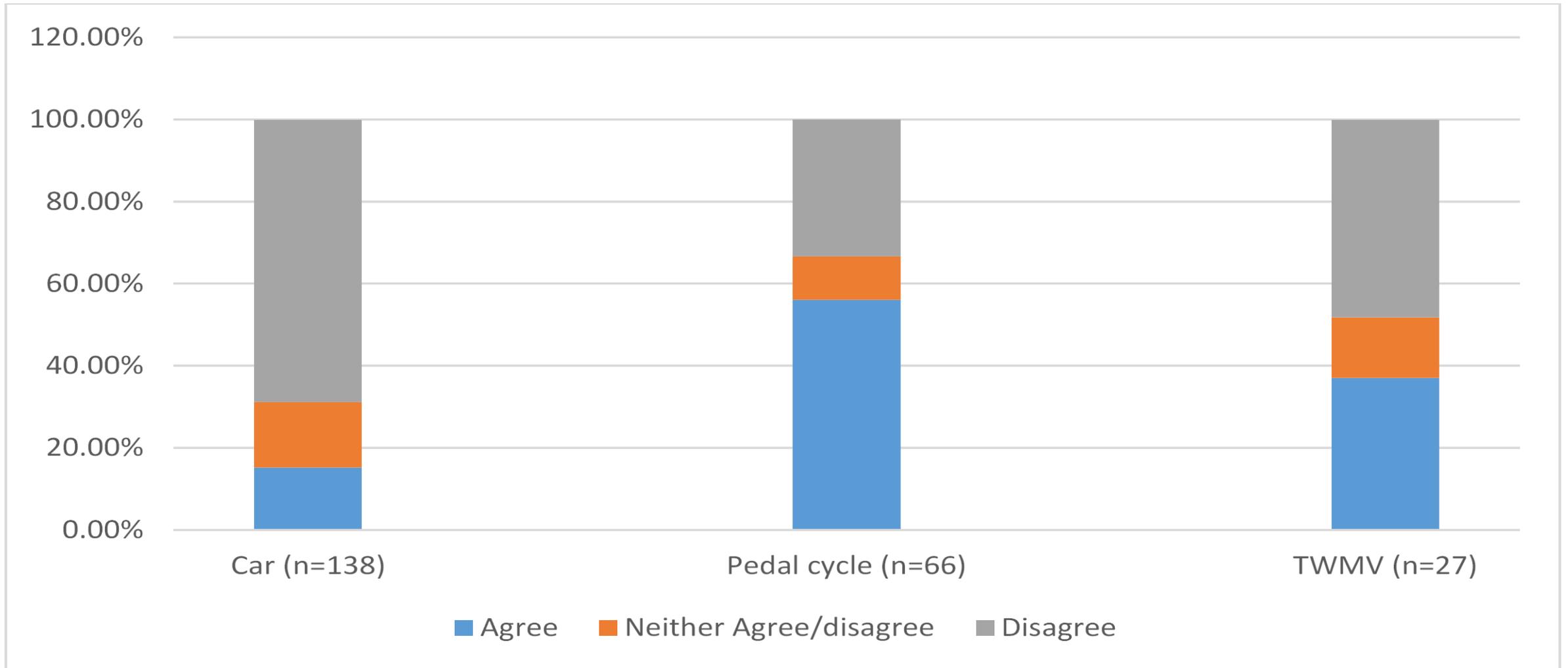
SURVEY:

- 40% of those using an app found them to be distracting whilst driving or riding



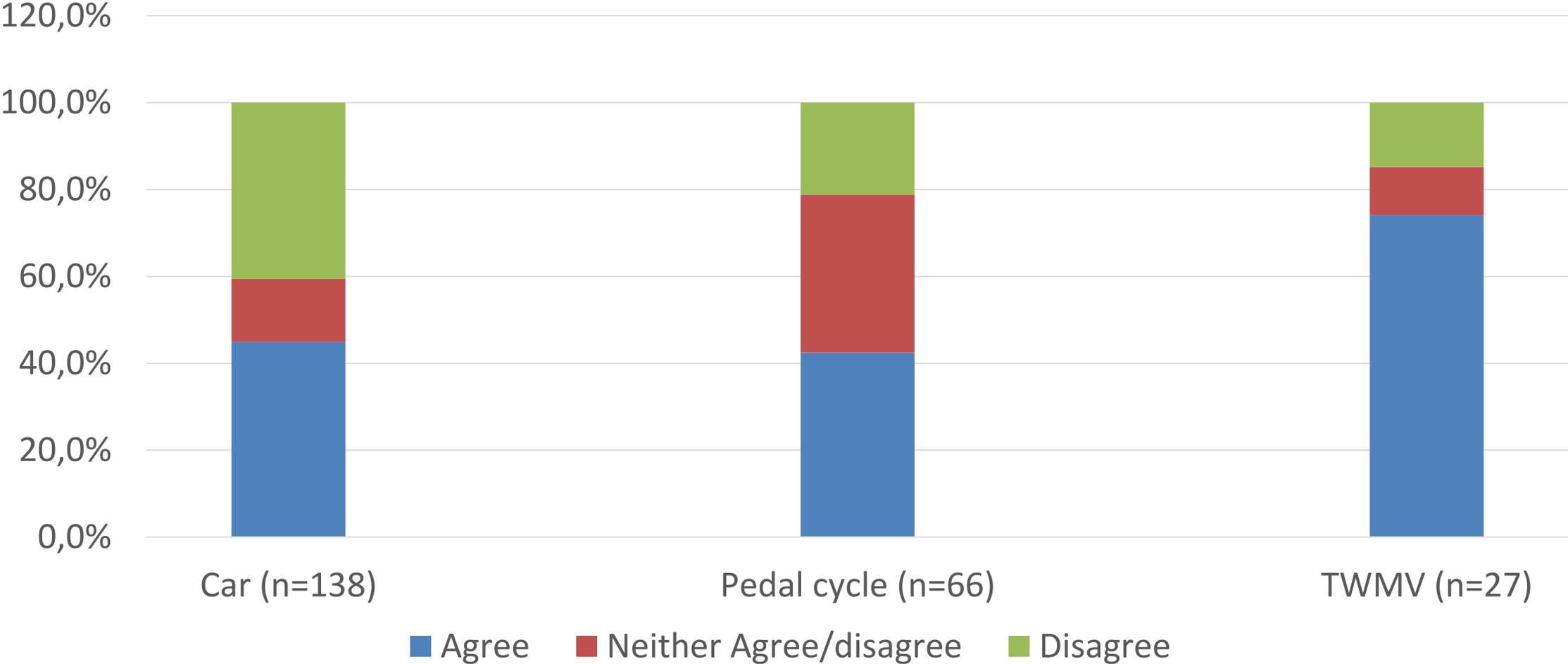
Violations: traffic lights

% level of agreement with statement "I have driven/ridden through a red light when I've been under pressure" by vehicle used for gig work



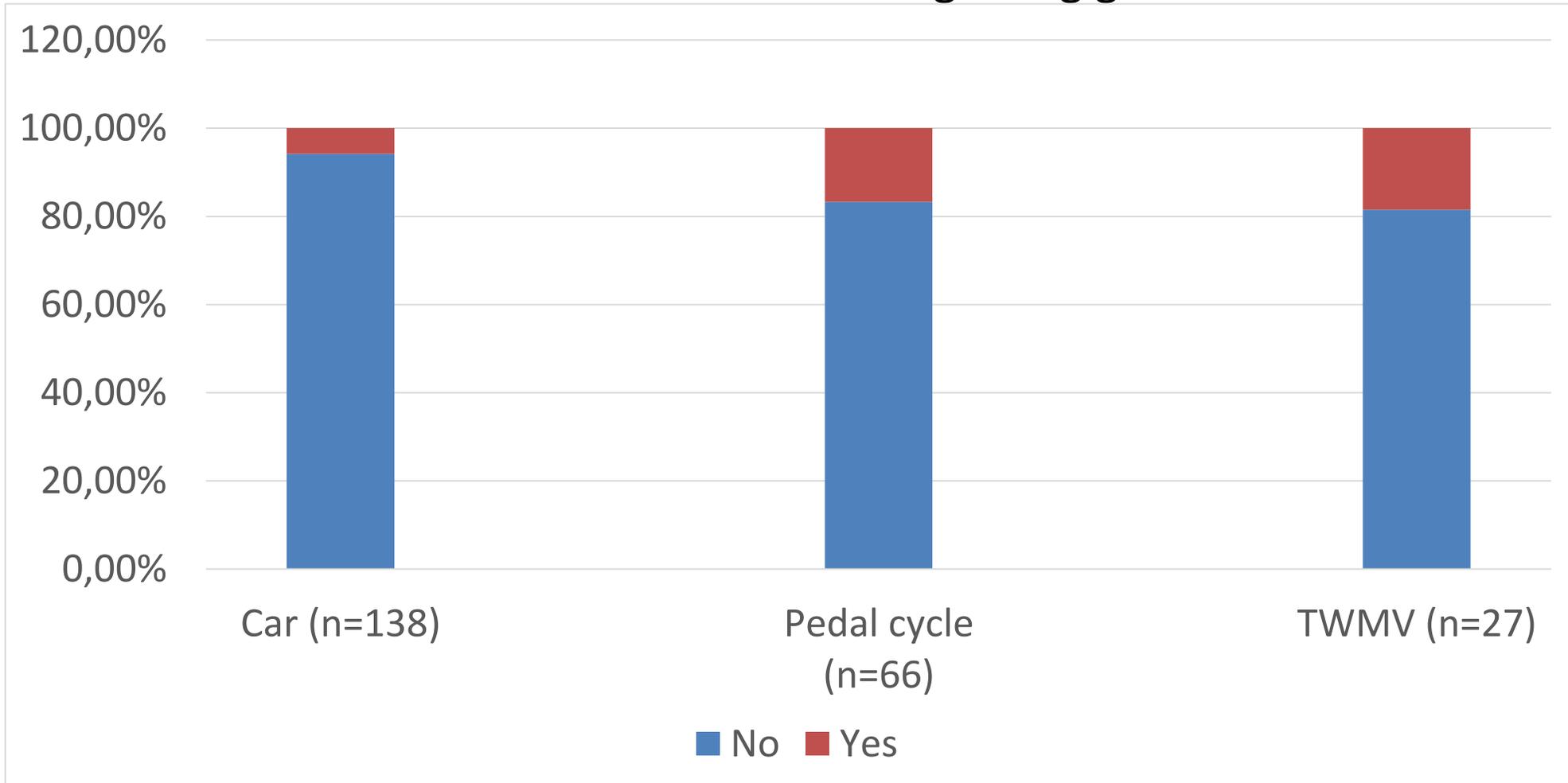
Violations: Speed

% level of agreement with statement "The time pressure of gig work can make you travel over the speed limit" by vehicle used for gig work



Collisions

% reporting that someone has been injured in a collision they were involved in when driving as a gig worker



Key road safety themes which emerge from research among gig economy drivers and riders: A perfect storm?

