

- THE ISLAMIC SUNNAH NAP/SIESTA WILL PREVENT MOST OF THIS DANGEROUS SLEEP
- (Dr Katme)

How one in ten drivers have nodded off at the wheel

By Ray Massey

One in 10 motorists admit to nodding off at the wheel, disturbing new research reveals today. Some 3.4 million motorists - 9 per cent of the total - have fallen asleep while driving in the past 12 months. Often this is just a 'micro-sleep' that can last for a second or so but long enough to cause a tragedy. Indeed the report suggests dozing at the wheel caused up to 170,000 accidents last year, most of them not reported.



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The new research from LV= car insurance reveals that these motorists nod off for an average of just 1.17 seconds. But as they are travelling at just over 50mph, that's long enough for them to cover 26 metres - or the equivalent of two double-decker buses.

Taken as a whole it means that in the past year alone dozing motorists drove a total distance of more than 55,000 miles.

Nearly half (48 per cent) of the drowsy drivers blamed monotonous roads while a quarter (25 per cent) said they were lacking sleep overnight, one in ten (11 per cent) blamed holiday driving and 1 in 33 blamed their medication. The results emerged after insurers LV= commissioned PCP research to question 2,511 British adults (aged 18 and over), of whom 80 per cent currently drive.

Of the 3.4 million motorists who confessed to falling asleep behind the wheel in the past 12 months, one in twenty (5 per cent) say they had an accident - equivalent to 170,000 drivers. And nearly a third (29 per cent) say they either swerved or veered off the road while dozing - equivalent to nearly a million (986,000).



Men are nearly three times as likely to fall asleep at the wheel than women

Nearly a third say they were feeling drowsy even before they got into their cars and that one in five said they were 'hardly been able to keep their eyes open while driving.'

The report notes how official police figures obtained via a Freedom of Information request, reveal that there were more than 3,357 fatigue related road accidents recorded over the past five years. But as only 15 police forces out of 51 were able to provide this information, experts believe the true figure is closer to 11,000. The report says: 'The monotony of motorways and dual carriageways combined with a lack of sleep, are the main reasons cited for dozing while driving.'

Typically drivers fall asleep behind the wheel at night when there is not much light and fewer cars on the road, says the report.

Nearly six out of ten (56%) of those who fell asleep while driving say it happened between 8pm and 6am. Men are nearly three times as likely to fall asleep at the wheel than women with a third of men (33 per cent) and one in eight (12 per cent) of women nodding off at the wheel. John O'Roarke, Managing Director of LV= car insurance said: 'Falling asleep while driving, even momentarily, is extremely dangerous but taking regular breaks from driving can help prevent it. If you know you are going to be driving long distance, plan ahead and make sure you have sufficient time to rest.' Previous research suggests that driver fatigue is a contributory factor in as many as one in five accidents. And an American study in April suggested that tired drivers are four times more likely to crash.