Many teens somehow believe driving under the influence does not affect their safety, according to a survey published by the insurance company Liberty Mutual and Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD). Worse still nearly 25 percent of American teenagers drives under the influence of some drug.

Not surprisingly for teenagers, there is a disconnect between their perceived driving ability following the consumption of alcohol or other drugs and the reality of the situation.

In particular, 91 percent percent of the teenagers surveyed regarded themselves as safe and cautious drivers. Yet, 40 percent of them also say that driving under the influence of alcohol and other drugs does not affect their ability to drive safely. Some even said that their driving was actually improved by drugs especially when using marijuana. A shocking number (75% percent) of this group felt that marijuana either had no impact on their driving or improved it.

There are 23 million teenagers who are old enough to drive in the USA, and each year more than 3,000 of them die in driving accidents. A teenager is three times more likely to be involved in a fatal car crash than older drivers.

The report, which appeared in today s Medical News Today, cites additional troubling statistics.

In particular, when asked if the following drugs affected their driving skills:

- 23% of teens who have driven while on prescription medications said not at all
- 25% of teens who have driven under the influence of marijuana said not at all
- 14% of teens who have driven under the influence of alcohol said not at all

Yet, not all the news is bad. A report published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in October 2012, reported that 10 percent of American teenagers admitted to driving under the influence of alcohol during the preceding 30 days, a drop of 54 percent compared to 1991 (22 percent).

CDC Director Thomas R. Frieden said, We are moving in the right direction. Rates of teen drinking and driving have been cut in half in 20 years. But we must keep up the momentum one in 10 high school teens, aged 16 and older, drinks and drives each month, endangering themselves and others.

SADD and Liberty Mutual recommend that parents should consider having a Parent/Teen Driving Contract a customized agreement allows parents to create and maintain family driving rules.

ACSH s Dr. Gilbert Ross says, Despite a significant effort over the past decade to crack down on
DUI, we clearly have a long way to go. Teens, being less experienced behind the wheel are already at a higher risk for accidents. There should be a zero tolerance for driving while impaired. Possibly even the suspense or loss of a driving license.