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PENALTIES FOR SPEEDING AND THEIR EFFECT ON MOVING VIOLATIONS: EVIDENCE FROM QUEBEC DRIVERS

ABSTRACT

In 2008, the province of Quebec drastically increased penalties for speeding well above the speed limit by doubling fines and instituting on-the-spot licence suspension. Using administrative driving and licensing records in Quebec from 2006 to 2010, we examine whether the new law discouraged unlawful driving behaviour by investigating the frequency with which motorists received traffic citations. We find that the new law was effective in deterring motorists from speeding. Moreover, the effect was most pronounced for males compared with females, for young compared with old, and especially so for drivers with high demerit point balances accumulated from past infractions compared with those with few or no tickets. In sum, the change in behaviour was most apparent for those drivers who were the intended targets for the legislation.