Objective: Using seat belt is an effective safety method for protecting car occupants from injuries and fatalities in road vehicle accidents. Efforts to improve seat belt usage can be enhanced by identifying specific factors that motivate this behavior. The aim of this study was to investigate the effect of habit, moral norm and anticipated regret on seat belt use in a sample of car drivers in Bandar Abbas, Iran.

Methods: The convenience sample consisted of 284 eligible automobile drivers who frequented eight petrol (gasoline) stations in different geographical areas of the city. Data were collected through a self-administered questionnaire including demographic characteristics, frequency of seat belt use and items related to habit, moral norm and anticipated regret. Items were measured on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Results: The subjects’ mean age was 31.6 years (SD=8.7), the majority were male (72.9%), and more than half (53%) were university educated. Just over half of the participants (52.2%) had a history of automobile accidents. Of all the subjects, 53.4% reported that they “often” used seat belts. Habit, moral norm and anticipated regret each had a positive significant correlation with seat belt use (p<0.001). Multiple regression analyses revealed that habit and anticipated regret significantly predict seat belt use, but there was no significant relationship between moral norm and seat belt use (R²=0.46, F=72.6, p<0.05). The contribution of habit to the prediction of seat belt use was more than the contribution of anticipated regret.

Conclusion: It is concluded that car drivers who had more habit and more anticipated regret were more likely to use seat belt.