



DATA

How common is head injury when cycling?

For commentary on this data, see: [Child cyclist head injuries in England: the wider context](#)

An analysis of hospital admissions data for England from the Department of Health shows the following information concerning head injury for children under 16 years of age. (Franklin and Chapman, 2005)

Context

To assess the following data in context, the number of children in England under 16 years who cycle is approximately 6 million (Sport England, 2003).
Statistics exclude intentional or self-inflicted injuries.

Data for the year 2002/3

Hospital admissions for head injury:

All causes: 30,533
Cyclists: 2,183
Cycling represents 7.1% of all head injuries

Proportion of all injuries that involve head injury:

All causes: 34.2%
Cyclists: 37.6%
Pedestrians: 43.7%

Serious head injuries:

All causes: 5,875
Cyclists: 385 - 550 *
Pedestrians: 4,564
Cycling represents 6.5% of all serious head injuries

With some potential for mitigation by effective head protection: 370 - 516 *

This is a theoretical upper limit: [see commentary](#)

[*: lower figure is known serious injuries and is the figure comparable with those for all causes and pedestrians; upper figure includes an adjustment to take account of undefined injuries]

Deaths due to head injury:

Cyclists: 10
This represents 53% of child cyclist deaths

Serious head injuries involving a motor vehicle

Cyclists: 86
Pedestrians: 384



Trends 1995/6 to 2002/3

Cyclist head injuries

3,514 in 1995/6, fell to 2,183 in 2002/3

The proportion of all injuries that included head injury declined from 48% to 38% - a fall of 21%.

Cyclist deaths due to head injury

31 in 1995, declined steadily to 10 in 2002.

The proportion of deaths due to head injury declined from 72% to 53% - a fall of 26%.

Cycle helmet use

All children: 17.6% in 1994, down to 15.2% by 2002.

Boys (who account for 5 out of 6 injuries in this age group): 16.0% in 1994, falling steadily to 12.3% in 2002.

(Gregory, Inwood and Sexton, 2003)

This represents in decline in helmet use of 14% for all children, 23% for boys most at risk.

References

Franklin and Chapman, 2005

Franklin J, Chapman G, 2005. [Quantifying the risk of head injury to child cyclists in England: an analysis of hospital admissions data](#). BHRF .

<http://www.cyclehelmets.org/1148.html>

Gregory, Inwood and Sexton, 2003

Gregory K, Inwood C, Sexton B, 2003. [Cycle helmet wearing in 2002](#). Transport Research Laboratory Report 578.
http://www.tlr.co.uk/store/report_detail.asp?Snd=2729

Sport England, 2003

[Young people and sport in England](#). Sport England, 2003. **External Link**

<http://www.sportengland.org/downloads/Young-People-and-Sport-2002-report.pdf>

The Bicycle Helmet Research Foundation (BHRF), an incorporated body with an international membership, exists to undertake, encourage and spread the scientific study of the use of bicycle helmets. Also to consider the effect of the promotion and use of helmets on the perception of cycling in terms of risk and the achievement of wider public health and societal goals.

BHRF strives to provide a resource of best-available factual information to assist the understanding of a complex subject, and one where some of the reasoning may conflict with received opinion. In particular BHRF seeks to provide access to a wider range of information than is commonly made available by those that take a strong helmet promotion stance. It is hoped that this will assist informed judgements about the pros and cons of cycle helmets.

For more information, please visit www.cyclehelmets.org.

Document downloaded 21 Jan 2018. The copyright in this document is owned by the Bicycle Helmet Research Foundation, but it may be reproduced or distributed freely so long as the content is not modified in any way.