

# Circumstances of on-road single-vehicle cyclist crashes in the Australian Capital Territory

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## Abstract

Despite the large number of single- vehicle bicycle crashes, very little is known about their risk factors. The lack of research in this area is mainly due to under reporting of these crashes in police crash data and lack of information about the circumstances leading to their occurrence in other administrative data (i.e. hospital data).

The study examines the circumstances of single-vehicle cyclist crashes that occur on public roads.

A survey of adult cyclists who were injured as a result of a crash and presented to emergency departments in the Australian Capital Territory over a period of 6 months, November 2009 to May 2010. Participants injured in on-road single-vehicle crashes are the focus of this paper.

Overall, 105 cyclists reported being involved in on-road single-vehicle crashes which corresponds to 32% of all study participants and just over half of those involved in all single-vehicle crashes, including those that occurred off-road. Just over 66% of cyclists involved in on-road single-vehicle crashes first learned to ride when they were aged 5 to 9 years and just under 90% were regular cyclists riding an average of over 30Km per week. Almost three quarters reported losing control of the bicycle and about a quarter reported surface characteristics as contributing factors to the crash. Behavioural factors such as distraction (21%), speeding (16.2%) and alcohol (5.7%) as well as bike failure (19.6%) also contributed to the crash according to study participants.

The findings point to the importance of maintenance of roads frequently used by cyclists and the need for more research into the role of riding and bicycle handling skills training as well as cyclists education in preventing on-road single-vehicle crashes.

**Keywords:** cyclist, injury, crash, single.