

Cycling under the influence of alcohol

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ABSTRACT

Accident statistics suggest that alcohol plays an important role in fatal accidents of bicycle riders. However, with which Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) cyclists ride their bike is not known. In particular on nights out cycling under influence of alcohol seems common. To evaluate prevalence of cycling under influence of alcohol, BAC of cyclists was measured with a Breathalyzer on four nights out [1]; two Thursday nights, typical nights for going out clubbing in student cities, and on two Saturday nights. Breath samples of 687 bicyclists were taken from 5 PM till 8 AM in two Dutch cities, a city with a high proportion of students: Groningen, and a large city with a moderate student population: The Hague. Apart from the difference in proportion students, another difference between the two cities is that pubs do not have closing times in Groningen, while most pubs close 2 AM in The Hague.

Results show an increase over the night in percentage of cyclists who have alcohol in their blood; at 6 PM 7.7 % had a BAC above zero, but after 1 AM this percentage had risen to 89. At that time 68 % had an in the Netherlands illegal BAC above 0.5‰. The average BAC of all cyclists with a BAC above zero was 0.79‰. Differences between the two cities and two days of the week were found to be very limited. The conclusion is that cycling under the influence of alcohol is very common on nights out in the Netherlands.

Keywords: alcohol, BAC, cycling, Netherlands.

REFERENCES

- [1] D. de Waard, S. Houwing, B. Lewis-Evans, D. Twisk, & K. Brookhuis, "Bicycling under the influence of alcohol". Paper submitted for publication.