

TITLE: Prevalence, patterns and reported preferences in helmet use among bicyclists in the region of Crete.

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Cooperation work of different countries (partners) within the COST TU1101 WG 1 action “better cycling”

AIM: The current study was carried out within the COST TU1101 Program action “better cycling”. It aimed to identify factors that affect the prevalence of helmet use as well as the bicyclists’ preferences in helmets’ standards. Among the factors examined were the type of bicycle, the type of helmet and the crash involvement in the past three years.

METHODS: A convenient sample of 307 bicyclists from the city of Heraklion (217 men, aged 18-63 years) was invited to complete a self-reported questionnaire through personal interviews. The questionnaire consisted of 66 items including frequency and patterns of bicycle riding and helmet use as well as information about previous crash involvement while riding a bicycle.

RESULTS: The majority of the respondents did not use a helmet while riding a bicycle (n=162, 53%). The respondents’ decision to use a bicycle seemed to be influenced primarily by the quality and safety in helmet construction (n=240, 78%) followed by the price of the helmet (75%). Responders who reported using racing type of bicycle used a helmet more frequently while riding, than the responders who reported using city, mountain and other types of bicycle (p=0,001).

CONCLUSIONS: Certain groups of bicycle users seem to be less likely to use helmets and should be taken into consideration road safety policies and initiatives. The type of bicycle may be a good indicator of helmet use and the explanation behind that needs further investigation.