

Access to motorbikes without taking a prior exam increases the number of accidents

August 31 2009



The number of deceased motorists increased 33 percent between 2003 and 2008.
Credit: SINC

Pedestrians and motorcyclists continue to be those most vulnerable in traffic accidents. A team of researchers has demonstrated an increase in the number of injuries among users of lightweight motorcycles after a law was passed in 2004 allowing the riding of motorbikes with a class B licence (for cars). In contrast, the study, focusing on Barcelona and published in the latest issue of the WHO Magazine, confirms that the risk of having an accident has remained unchanged.

In 2004, in order to improve the flow of traffic and reduce the number of cars on the roads occupied by a single person, the Spanish government passed a law allowing holders of a class B driving licence (for cars) over

a period of more than three years to ride motorcycles, whose use is permitted with a class A1 licence (for lightweight motorbikes).

Catherine Pérez is the main author of the study published in the latest issue of the World Health Organization Magazine and a researcher from the Barcelona Public Health Agency (ASPB). "We have evaluated the differences between the risk of traffic injuries among motorcyclists before and after the approval of the law", she explained to SINC.

The results of the work show that the risk of injuries among the users of lightweight motorcycles has increased by 46% in the three years since the approval of the law but, once this figure is adjusted owing to the high increase in the number of motorbikes, no rise in the risk for riders of light motorcycles is observed. "This leads us to think that other factors, such as the measures to reduce car use and the situation of economic growth during this period have led to an increase in the use of motorbikes", explained the researcher.

"Facilitating car drivers' access to motorcycles without the need to pass a specific exam beforehand which acts as an access filter increases the number of traffic injuries involving motorbikes", declared the researcher. "The average number of injuries per month has risen from 104.6 to 154.3. Besides, before the law came into force, the number of injuries in motorcycle accidents displayed a slightly downward trend".

To reach these conclusions, the scientists have compared the data on traffic injuries to users of light motorbikes (51-125 c.c.) and heavy motorbikes (>125 c.c.) with those of mopeds (

Fatal motorbike injuries in Spain

Only in 2005, 41,247 people died in Europe owing to traffic accidents, 21.1% of them in motorcycle accidents. In Spain, in the same year,

motorbikes accounted for 7.2% of all motor vehicles and 8.4% of all fatal injuries in traffic accidents. Although the number of victims of motorcycle accidents accounted for 7.4% of all injuries in traffic accidents between 1998 and 2004, there was an increase of almost 30% between 2006 and 2007.

The latest data from the General Traffic Authority (DGT) indicate that, between 2003 and 2008, the number of car deaths has fallen by 53.3% and that of pedestrians knocked down by 48.2%. It also highlights the increase of 33% in the number of fatal injuries to motorcyclists over these five years, representing a total of 76 more deaths.

Nevertheless, the DGT is optimistic. According to the still provisional 2008 report, the number of fatal motorcycle injuries, which has increased since 2004 and particularly in 2007, has fallen by 27.7%. Last year in Spain, 1,929 fatal accidents took place in which 2,181 people died, representing a fall of 20.4% in the total number of accidents.

More information: Catherine Pérez, Marc Marí-Dell'Olmo, Carme Borrell, Manel Nebot, Joan R Villalbí, Elena Santamariña & Aurelio Tobías. "Road injuries and relaxed licensing requirements for driving light motorcycles in Spain: a time-series analysis". Bulletin of the World Health Organization; 87:497, July 2009.

Source: FECYT - Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology

Citation: Access to motorbikes without taking a prior exam increases the number of accidents (2009, August 31) retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2009-08-access-motorbikes-prior-exam-accidents.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private

study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.