

Sporting events and traffic fatalities: When winning is not a good thing

April 19 2011

When your team wins a close one, you may be in danger driving home after the game, according to a new study in the *Journal of Consumer Research*. The study shows that traffic fatalities rise near the hometowns of winning teams on game days.

"The thrill of victory may result in a not-so-thrilling consequence for winning fans' drive home," write authors Stacy Wood (North Carolina State University), Melayne Morgan McInnes, and David A. Norton (both University of South Carolina). "While some sports junkies will be quick to tell you they live and die by whether their favorite sports team wins, there may be more truth in their statements than they know."

Just how much does the outcome of a sporting event affect our drive home from the stadium? The authors examined data from 271 [sporting events](#) that took place over an eight-year period. The games were highly anticipated football and basketball games, like playoffs and rivalry games—both professional and collegiate. Because scores don't always reflect how close a game really is, the authors even recruited avid sports fans to rate the closeness of the games.

They cross checked the national Highway Safety Administration's traffic fatality database with the dates of the games to determine how many fatal traffic accidents occurred in those cities on the dates of the games.

"We find that the closer a game is the more automobile fatalities there are, especially those involving alcohol," the authors write. "This increase

in number of fatalities, however, only happens in locations with high numbers of winning fans (game sites and winning hometown)." The study found no increase in [traffic fatalities](#) in the losing teams' hometowns.

High levels of testosterone produced from vicariously winning a close game seem to influence how winning spectators drive home, according to the authors.

The authors believe spectators, team management, public safety officers, and health care providers can all benefit from knowing that that the roads are more dangerous after close games. "It would be wise to allow for a 'cooling off' period, where one could bask in the glory of victory safely," the authors conclude.

More information: Stacy Wood, Melayne Morgan McInnes, and David A. Norton. "The Bad Thing about Good Games: The Relationship between Close Sporting Events and Game-Day Automobile Fatalities." *Journal of Consumer Research*: December 2011. Further information: ejcr.org

Provided by University of Chicago

Citation: Sporting events and traffic fatalities: When winning is not a good thing (2011, April 19) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-04-sporting-events-traffic-fatalities-good.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.