

Fearful flyers willing to pay more and alter flight plans, according to travel study

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Fearful flyers seek flight attributes that may be primarily reassuring, such as schedule, aircraft size and carrier origin, but have little effect on the low, actual risk according to a study published in the *Journal of Travel Research*.

People with fear of flying (FOF) are willing to pay more for a number of choices that help them alleviate their fear, according to the study by researchers at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (BGU), The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and [Technion Israel Institute of Technology](#).

According to the researchers, this is the first study that links FOF with specific flight selection choices. The percentage of the population suffering from FOF has increased over the past few decades, even though statistics demonstrate that air travel is the safest mode, according to the [International Air Transport Association](#).

The researchers found that these flyers were less sensitive to price changes and that they were more willing to pay for a flight with their home carrier, rather than a foreign carrier or a charter so that they could communicate freely with the crew in their own familiar language. Reduction in barriers such as language, social and cultural norms can be helpful, in their minds, to reduce anxiety.

FOF travelers have preferences concerning the aircraft size and manufacturer. They favor day flights over night flights and prefer nonstop flights over connecting flights due to the stress of take-offs and

landings. These white knuckle flyers are also more confident flying with name carriers versus low-cost carriers.

The researchers questioned 335 Israeli students and offered each several choices of alternative flight itineraries from Israel to London and Israel to New York. The data revealed that all of the respondents stated that they intend to fly in the future and approximately 77 percent had flown at least once during the five years preceding the survey.

"Due to accumulation of [media exposure](#) of flight accidents, fear of flying is on the rise, even though statistics show that air travel is the safest means of travel," explains Dr. Anat Tchetchik of BGUs Department of Hotel and Tourism Management. "How people make choices on their mode of travelling and how it affects their willingness to pay for alternative [flight](#) options is an issue of immense concern for public agencies and the industry."

Tchetchik and her colleagues believe public agencies should be publishing safety-related information in an accessible manner so that the public can make its choices based on actual scientific data rather than unsubstantiated beliefs.

Provided by American Associates, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

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