Too drunk to ride?
Insights on cyclists’ behaviour and attitudes towards alcohol, drugs and cycling

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Why alcohol and drugs impact cyclist safety

- Negative physiological impacts
  - Balance
  - Psychomotor and cognitive skills
    - slows responses
    - alters senses

Intoxication = ↑ injury severity + ↑ hospital stay
Study aim
Identify cyclist attitudes towards and use of alcohol and drugs

Study method
In-depth interviews
Post-crash
Sandringham and Alfred Hospitals
n=158
Participants

Gender

Age

Cycling experience

Licence

Helmet

Alcohol test

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Alcohol
Can a cyclist be over 0.05?

No

BAC 0.05
Breathalysed

Yes

Summary offence
Sobriety test
Alcohol – attitudes

alcohol negatively affects cycling skills

97.4% agreed

3 disagreed
- Male
- Aged over 26 years
- Driver’s licence
- Not tested for alcohol
- Helmet
  - yes (1); no (2)
Alcohol – usual transport mode when intoxicated

Bike 9.9%
Alcohol – use

Tested 23/158

- Cyclist characteristics
  - Gender, age, licence, helmet use
- Crash characteristics
  - Location, time of crash, single/multiple vehicle, day of week
- Injury severity outcome

Stat. sig.

Age (p=0.02)
Single vehicle (p=0.05)
Alcohol – test results

Tested 23/158

Gender
Age
Cycling experience (yrs)
Transport mode
Crash
• Location
• Day/time
• Injury outcome

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<tr>
<th>Alcohol %</th>
<th>Zero</th>
<th>0.02</th>
<th>0.08</th>
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Drugs – attitudes

91.5% agreed

Some drugs worse than others?

55.9% Yes
marijuana: impact reaction time, balance
Cocaine, speed, ecstasy, hallucinogens, heroin or ‘anything the police would check for’
negative impact

42.1% no experience/didn’t know

1.3% declined

0.7% no difference

Drugs negatively affects cycling skills
Conclusions
Conclusions

In-depth study = new insights

Small sample size – few comparisons were stat. sig.

Important road safety issue

- Cyclists are likely to be less predictable when intoxicated
- Potentially higher risk of crash – greater self-harm
- Potentially higher risk to other roads – direct crash involvement or crash avoidance
Conclusions

Hospital testing for alcohol and drug use is low

To determine prevalence of alcohol and drug and the role of substances in crashes – more testing of cyclists is needed

Attitudes towards alcohol and drug use

Majority = negatively impact cycling skills

Future directions

Road safety campaigns that address substance use need to be broadened beyond drivers – cyclists and pedestrians
Acknowledgements

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keeping victorians connected

Alfred Health

Sandringham Hospital

City of Kingston

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Thank you

Questions?

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