

A Behavioral Comparison between Motorcyclists and a Matched Group of Non-motorcycling Car Drivers: Factors Influencing Accident Risk.

Abstract

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Introduction

Motorcyclists and a matched group of non-motorcycling car drivers were assessed on behavioral measures known to relate to accident involvement.

Results

Using a range of laboratory measures, the authors found that motorcyclists chose faster speeds than the car drivers, overtook more, and pulled into smaller gaps in traffic, though they did not travel any closer to the vehicle in front. The speed and following distance findings were replicated by two further studies involving unobtrusive roadside observation.

A second group of motorcyclists was asked to complete the simulator tests as if driving a car. They did not differ from the non-motorcycling car drivers on the risk-taking measures but were better at hazard perception. There were also no differences for sensation seeking, mild social deviance, and attitudes to riding/driving, indicating that the risk-taking tendencies of motorcyclists did not transfer beyond motorcycling, while their hazard perception skill did.

Conclusion

The authors suggest that the increased risk-taking behavior of motorcyclists was only likely to account for a small proportion of the difference in accident risk between motorcyclists and car drivers.