

As pedestrian's age rises, so does odds of dying in traffic accident

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CDC report finds that people aged 75 or older face double the risk compared to younger.

(HealthDay)—Elderly pedestrians face a much higher risk of being killed in a traffic accident than the young do, a new government report finds.

The analysis of 2001-2010 U.S. data showed that traffic-related death rates for men and women aged 75 and older were more than double those of people aged 34 and younger.

Overall, pedestrians make up 4,000 of the nearly 34,000 traffic-related deaths occurring in the United States each year, according to researchers from the U.S. [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

The number of elderly killed while walking on America's road could even increase given the aging of the U.S. population, said CDC experts commenting on the finding.

They noted that [older adults](#) actually take fewer walks than younger people, "however, when struck, older adult pedestrians are more likely to die from their injuries."

Increasing frailty may leave the elderly more vulnerable to being hit by traffic, as well. Age-linked declines in mental function, vision and [physical disabilities](#) "might place older adult pedestrians at greater risk for being struck by a vehicle," the CDC added.

Between 2001 and 2010, more than 47,000 Americans died in traffic-related pedestrian deaths, with males having more than double the risk of being hit and killed versus females. It's been suggested that this may be because males tend to walk in more dangerous settings or take more chances when walking.

About three-fourths of pedestrian deaths occurred in cities, the researchers said.

The study appears in the April 19 issue of the CDC publication *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.

When the researchers looked at ethnic/racial groups, they found that [American Indians](#)/Alaskan Natives had the highest death rates, while whites had the lowest death rates.

Pedestrian fatalities can be prevented, the CDC said, and efforts to do so should include installing speed bumps on certain roadways, enforcing speeding and distracted [driving laws](#), and "creating pedestrian safety zones and streets designated for walking."

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers [pedestrian safety tips](#).

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