

Men aged 20-29 who swap car for bicycle for work commute have 'particularly high risk' of collisions, study finds

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Switching from driving to a cycling commute helps Dublin city dwellers

improve their physical health and mental wellbeing. However, the overall positive health benefits of cycling to the local population may mask some potential negative health impacts to individual cyclists, according to a new study involving researchers from Trinity College Dublin and University College Dublin.

The study of more than 50,000 Dublin city commuters, published in the *Journal of Transport and Health*, investigated whether or not the benefits to an individual taking up cycling in Dublin outweighed the risks for all ages, genders and trip lengths. Data came from the Central Statistics Office, from the 2011 census.

Among the key results were that a shift to cycling had an overall positive effect on the health of the population. It is associated with a 10 to 20 percent reduction in conditions like cardiovascular disease, breast cancer, colon cancer, dementia, depression and type II diabetes among individuals.

But the study also highlighted that men aged 20 to 29 who make the switch have a particularly high risk of collisions with other vehicles on the road. This risk was also shown to increase with every extra kilometre they travel so that some individuals within this category experience a net negative health impact of switching to a cycling commute.

"Commuting to work by bicycle generally brings about considerable physical and mental health benefits for the cyclists, as well as benefiting the rest of the local population through avoidance of toxic emissions and other negative impacts of motorised transport," said senior author on the paper, Assistant Professor in Civil Engineering at Trinity College Dublin, Bidisha Ghosh.

"To ensure that the improved [health](#) of the local population due to switching from driving to cycling does not come at the expense of

beginner young male cyclists, the risk of traffic collisions for cyclists in the Dublin network must be reduced through provision of adequate infrastructure and also by improving driver awareness and perception of cyclists," said Ronan Doorley, Trinity College Dublin who co-authored the paper.

Co-author, Professor Vikram Pakrashi, University College Dublin, concluded: "In light of the positive impacts for the local [population](#) and for the majority of cyclists, it remains important to promote economic incentives like the Bike to Work scheme."

The study makes several recommendations for increasing [cycling](#) safety including improving cycle lanes, introducing traffic calming measures in residential areas and encouraging awareness of cyclists among drivers.

Provided by University College Dublin

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