

E-scooter injuries rack up big medical bills

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Electric scooters might seem a fun way to zip about, but they're also a pricey hazard to riders' health, a new study argues.

Orthopedic treatment for 82 patients injured in [e-scooter](#) wrecks

averaged more than \$28,400 per person, as doctors labored to mend broken bones and dislocated joints.

"E-scooters go up to 20 miles per hour, but people are allowed to ride them on sidewalks with no safety equipment. It's no surprise that many riders have had high-energy traumas, and their communities often absorb the cost," said researcher [Dr. Drew Sanders](#), an associate professor of orthopedic surgery and residency program director at UT Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas.

E-scooter injuries have increased dramatically in recent years, rising 22% between 2021 and 2022, according to a recent [report](#) from the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Dallas offers an e-scooter sharing program that was suspended in 2020 due to safety concerns but brought back in spring 2023, researchers said in background notes.

For their study, researchers analyzed [medical records](#) at Parkland Memorial Hospital, a [public hospital](#) that serves Dallas County. The hospital is funded by county residents through property taxes to provide safety-net care for those without insurance.

The team identified 82 patients treated between January 2017 and August 2020 for injuries linked to [e-scooters](#).

About 7 in 10 patients were male, with an average age of 34.

The most common injuries were elbow and ankle fractures, although other types of fractures and dislocations occurred frequently.

About 30% of the cases required hospitalization, 23% needed ambulance transport and 15% needed an ER trauma team for treatment, results

show.

Overall, orthopedic treatment of these patients cost more than \$2.3 million, researchers said.

Because two-thirds of patients were either uninsured or insured by the public hospital system, the community bore most of this cost, Sanders said.

The new study was published recently in the [Journal of Orthopaedic Business](#).

"Given the magnitude of associated health system costs demonstrated within this study, the [financial burden](#) to the city or taxpayers may be of additional consideration when regulating this burgeoning form of transportation," the authors concluded in a journal news release.

More information: The University of South Florida has more about [e-scooter safety](#).

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