

Walking is healthy...isn't it? Not on the streets of New York

By ACSH Staff — April 6, 2013

In 2010, there were 11,000 pedestrians and 3500 bicyclists injured by motor vehicles in New York City. Although Mayor Michael Bloomberg may be known for increasing street safety traffic fatality rates have drastically decreased during his term there is still more that needs to be done to decrease collisions in New York. This fact is strongly supported by a [recent study](#) ^[1] of injured pedestrians and cyclists conducted by researchers at the NYU Langone Medical Center.

The researchers looked at 1400 pedestrians and cyclists who had been treated at Bellevue Hospital Center from December 2008 to June 2011. The study found that 8 percent of those injured had been using an electronic device and that 40 percent of cyclists and 25 percent of pedestrians were hit by taxis. Furthermore, the study also found that crosswalks were not completely safe, with 44 percent of injuries occurring in crosswalks. And interestingly, excessive weight was found to be protective in a collision, although Dr. Spiros G. Frangos, the study's senior author, notes that those overweight patients generally had worse outcomes once admitted to the hospital. This suggests that the "extra layer offers some protection at the time of the injury."

Officials believe that this report highlights the need for bike lanes, pedestrian plazas and other traffic-calming measures. And Dr. Frangos adds that undoubtedly, behaviors can be improved across three major parties: pedestrians, cyclists and drivers. The bottom line is: What else can we do as we go down this path of pushing a bicycling agenda?

ACSH's Dr. Elizabeth Whelan, a long-term observer and critic of traffic conditions in our city, had this to say: It's great that the city is full of so many walkers and bikers. But engineers really need to focus on ways to make the city more walker and biker friendly. In the meantime, bikers, pedestrians, and drivers especially taxi drivers should make sure to be more aware of their surroundings, a step which should at least result in some of these injuries being prevented.

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[1] http://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/03/nyregion/study-details-injuries-to-pedestrians-and-cyclists-in-new-york-city.html?_r=0&pagewanted=print