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Rear seat safety belts reduce death risk by almost a half

Medical Studies/Trials

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The Spanish Government's General Traffic Directorate (DGT) has been insisting for many years on that using the safety belt on the road can save lives. However, most of the drivers associate this warning with the use of such device in the front seats of cars, whereas its use in the rear seats is much more reduced.

With such a situation on the table, the paper 'Individual factors affecting the risk of death for rear-seated passengers in road crashes', prepared by the researchers **Pablo Lardelli Claret**, **José Juan Jiménez Mole?B>** and **Aurora Bueno Cavanillas** (of the [Department of Preventive Medicine and Public Health](#) of the [University of Granada](#)) and **Juan de Dios Luna del Castillo** (of the [Department of Statistics](#)), shows the importance of the use of the safety belt in the rear seats of the car. Their work has produced very significant data such as the following one: the use of this safety system in such seats reduces the risk of death by a 44 per cent.

The research work, carried out from data provided by the [Government's General Traffic Directorate](#) on road crashes occurred between 1993 and 2002 in Spain, analyses the death of the occupants of the rear seats according to their age, gender, use of restraint systems and seat position. To carry out this analysis they only considered the data concerning vehicles occupied by two or three rear-seated passengers for accidents in which at least one of these passengers was killed. The authors analyzed all 5,260 rear-seated passengers, who were travelling in 2,266 vehicles 2,851 of which were killed.

An increased risk of death was observed in this analysis carried out at the [UGR](#) for females and children aged <3 years : specifically, women are 28 per cent more likely to die than men, and children aged between 0 and two years old, 70 per cent more than those between 15 and 19 years old.

The research work also concludes that the risk of death when we are at the rear-seats of a vehicle is higher as we get older. According to the analysed data of the DGT, persons older than 64 years old are the highest risk sector when they travel rear-seated, as they have 407 per cent more possibilities of dying than persons aged between 15 and 19 years old.

The last variable analysed by the researchers from Granada is the death of passengers with regard to their location at the rear of the car's inside. Their work points out that those passengers who travel at the centre or the right side of the inside are less likely to be killed in the event of an accident than those who are at the left side.

Reference: Prof Pablo Lardelli Claret. [Department of Preventive Medicine and Public Health](#) of the [University of Granada](#).

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