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Seat Belt Use In The Rear Seats Of Cars Almost Halves Risk of Death

Main Category: Public Health
Article Date: 30 Jan 2008 - 3:00 PST

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The Spanish Government's General Traffic Directorate (DGT) has been insisting for many years that using the safety belt on the road can save lives. However, most of the drivers associate this warning with the use of such devices in the front seats of cars rather than in the rear seats, where seat belt use is much 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 Moleón 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 safety belts in the rear seats of cars. Their work has produced very significant data, not the least of which is that the use of this safety system in rear seats reduces the risk of death by 44 per cent.

The research work, carried out from data provided by the Government's General Traffic Directorate on road crashes which 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.

Women and children

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

The research work also concludes that the risk of death when we are in the rear seats of a vehicle increases as we get older. According to the analysed data of the DGT, people older than 64 years are in the highest risk sector when they travel in the rear seats, with a 407 per cent greater possibility 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 in the rear of the car's interior. Their study finds that those passengers who travel at the centre or the right side of the rear seats are less likely to be killed in the event of an accident than those who are on the left side.

Reference: Prof Pablo Lardelli Claret. Department of Preventive Medicine and Public Health of the University of Granada.

Versión española

Article adapted by Medical News Today from original press release.

Source: Pablo Lardelli Claret
Universidad de Granada

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