Cyclists casualties – why are serious injuries increasing while fatalities are falling?

This counterintuitive trend is only in cycling and only since 2005.

**Trend in London 2000-2020**

From TfL Fact Sheets and Annual reports on road Safety

C:\Cycling\Collisions\_incStats19\London\_fatals.xlsx

Record low fatal cycling collisions in London in 2019.

**What about serious injuries?**

C:\Cycling\Collisions\_incStats19\KSI\_London\_00\_18.xlsx

Data downloaded using the Road safety data download tool, link https://roadtraffic.dft.gov.uk/custom-downloads/road-accidents/reports/a2ec7722-0459-4ecc-846b-cdfdd717c6d0

Serious injuries are doing the opposite – going up. Seems counter-intuitive.

**What about rest of UK**

C:\Cycling\Collisions\_incStats19\KSI\_England\_00\_18.xlsx

Data downloaded using the Road safety data download tool, link https://roadtraffic.dft.gov.uk/custom-downloads/road-accidents/reports/874d6cc9-6c24-4c06-baa4-59b824ded030

England data similar to London. SI increasing as fatalities fall. As with London data, indication this disconnect may only be true post ca 2005.

**Longer time scale**

C:\Cycling\Collisions\_incStats19\ Copy of ras30065.xlsx

Spreadsheet with <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-annual-report-2018>

From 1978 to 2005 Serious injuries fall at same rate as fatalities. From around 2005 serious injuries start to rise even though fatalities are still falling.

**What about other modes – pedestrians, motorcylists, car users?**

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| GB road casualty trends, normalised. | | | |  | | | | | | | |  |  |  |  |
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No other mode shows serious injuries rising consistently, certainly not post 2005. Notable that pedestrians, the other unprotected active travel mode, show a close similarity between falls in fatalities and in serious injuries.

**Are there differences in the way injuries are classified?**

The criteria for different grades of injury are the same for all transport modes. There have been changes in time for which injuries are classed as “serious”. Notably since 2016 several police forces have used a new system resulting in more casualties being classed as seriously injured. The Dept for Transport statisticians have attempted by adjust casualty data for these changes. Data is available for 2008-2018.

The reduction in casualties in each class (killed, serious, slight) is the same for pedestrians and for car users. But cyclists still show an increase in serious injuries using the “adjusted” data. The other modes do not show this pattern. Data for slight injuries is also included in this figure. This data has also been adjusted for changes in the way injuries are classified. There are lots of problems with slight injury data as many collisions resulting in minor injuries never get reported to the police. Nevertheless it may be important that slight injuries in cyclists also appear to be a bit greater than expected from the trend in fatalities.

**What might explain the rising serious injuries in cyclists?**

A quick look at gender and age shows no differences. There has been little change in cyclist numbers or demographic since 2005. London, where there has been an increase in cycling, has the same trend as the UK as a whole. It would be interesting to see if there is an urban/rural difference as there have been different trends in cycling and in motor traffic. Would also be useful to look at whether certain types of vehicle are involved preferentially in cycling injuries since 2005. In London there has been a focus on HGVs, particularly those involved in construction, where collision rates are very high.

You need the whole Stats19 database up to date for these further analyses. Can only find year by year data up to 2014 on the UK National Archive. Is an up-to-date database covering the last 25 years available?

Report by Professor Bruce Lynn. Active with Southwark Cyclists (London Cycling Campaign). Can be contacted via his blog on this topic at