

Cycling helmets do not prevent injury or death

Re: More than half of young B.C. cyclists report always wearing a helmet, June 25

It is telling that there is no mention that wearing a lightweight piece of plastic does any good — only that many people wear them. The B.C. government took the same tack when they introduced the law; measuring compliance rates but not measuring injury and fatality rates. Instead they relied on a single study with fantastical claims that has now been debunked by the U.S. Department of Transport. If helmets worked as claimed there would be robust evidence of reduced injuries and fatalities in the cycling population. There isn't.

Too often we read of cyclists killed while wearing their helmets. They are almost always a victim of a collision with a motor vehicle. Unlike here, The Netherlands slashed cycling fatality rates by 75 per cent when the growing popularity of cars became a menace to the well-being of cyclists. They did this by placing the onus on motor vehicle operators to avoid collisions and by providing separated cycling facilities. Nobody wears helmets.

It was recently reported that in Vancouver cyclists had the right of way in 90 per cent of collisions with cars. Cycling helmet laws have been a "blame the victim" distraction away from pursuing safety solutions that work.

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