



Transport

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Women cyclists 'at greater risk from lorry deaths'

Ten of the 13 people who died in cycling accidents in London last year were women

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Fri 21 May 2010 13.07 EDT

A disproportionately high number of women died in cycling accidents in London last year, especially those involving lorries, according to figures from bike campaigners.

The [national cyclists' organisation CTC](#) said that 10 of the 13 people who died in cycling accidents in the capital last year were women and eight were killed by heavy goods vehicles. Yet there are around three times more male cyclists in London than women.

Some claim that female cyclists are more vulnerable than male riders because they tend to be less confident and aggressive on the road, and particularly around large vehicles.

In 2007, a leaked report by [Transport](#) for London's road safety unit noted that 86% of the women cyclists killed in London between 1999 and 2004 collided with a lorry. By contrast, lorries were involved in 47% of deaths of male cyclists.

The study was blunt in its conclusions: "Women may be over-represented in (collisions with goods vehicles) because they are less likely than men to disobey red lights."

By jumping red lights, it said, men are less likely to be caught in a lorry driver's blind spot, whereas less assertive cyclists who wait at the lights just in front of a lorry are at greater risk as they cannot be seen by the driver. But not everyone agrees. [Mark Ames, who writes the *ibikelondon* blog](#), thinks the focus should be on lorries themselves rather than the cyclists' gender.

"It is less about how you ride and what you ride and more about how other road users have to look out for the most vulnerable," said Ames, who also calls for a change in the noise pollution ban on HGVs from 9pm to 7am.

"It seems ludicrous that this scheme encourages lorries to come roaring out of their yards fully laden with goods into the morning rush hour peak: the very time when the most cyclists are making their way to work," he said.

Pete Lipman, policy director of sustainable transport charity Sustrans, said there were no definite explanations.

"Cycle training is an important part of the mix - in London a lot of the boroughs offer training focusing on teaching more assertive cycling and road positioning.

"There is also the potential for more work done with HGV drivers and manufacturers - reviewing mirroring on vehicles and the way in which the licence test takes into account a greater awareness of cyclists and pedestrians."

The London authorities have taken on board that HGVs pose a particular problem for cyclists. [Crossrail](#), which is building train lines across central London, plans to train all its 4-5,000 lorry drivers over the seven years of the project.

"Crossrail is a serious issue as there will be huge work sites in central London for years that will make for a more hazardous environment," said Chris Peck, policy co-ordinator for CTC.

"The day-long course is to break preconceptions that all cyclists are crazy and to teach drivers to share the road."

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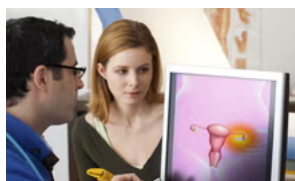
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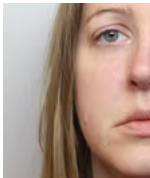
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