

## **Is peer pressure the biggest influence on the use of safety equipment by junior riders?**

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The aim of this study was to determine whether or not peer pressure was the biggest influence on the use of safety equipment by junior riders. In line with studies on the use of cycle helmets (Thompson et al., 2002; Fuentes et al., 2010; Stautz and Cooper, 2014 and others) this study used a questionnaire designed to be completed by riders under the age of 25 and their parents/guardians who were chosen using a random sampling method and a total of 355 responses were received (age ranges <5 yo 6.76%; 6-10 yo 13.80%; 11-18 yo 44.23%; 19-25 yo 35.21%).

A Chi Squared analysis was used to test the hypothesis that peer pressure was the major influencer against the results. The results suggest the wide spread use of helmets for riding with 99% of riders claiming to own at least one helmet with 78% stating it was fitted by a qualified fitter. In a response to questions concerning other items of safety equipment 17% of riders stated they always wear a body protector with 45% saying they never wore one at all. Peer pressure was not found to be a significant reason a body protector was not worn but rather it was comfort (although 59% of those who wore one had it fitted by a qualified person) with the safety standard being the main reason for selecting a equipment ( $p = <0.001$ ).

This study found safety standards and personal comfort to be high motivators when selecting a safety equipment which was similar to other studies on body armour in the police and armed services (Black et al., 2005; Horsfall et al., 2005; Dempsey et al., 2013).

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