

**Title:** ADULT RECREATIONAL BICYCLISTS: CHARACTERISTICS, USE OF SAFETY EQUIPMENT, AND INJURY

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**Abstract:**

The aim of this study was to characterize bicycle riders, bicycle-related injuries and utilization of protective equipment among adults (18+ years) in Israel in order to identify higher risk groups.

A cross-sectional survey was performed using questionnaires completed by cyclists aged 18 years and older. Data were collected in 10 major bicycling areas in Israel during two weekends in May 2008 and focused on riding characteristics, bicycle-related injuries, and use of protective equipment. Comparisons were performed based on primary type of riding activity – park, on-road and off-road.

Questionnaires were completed by 622 cyclists. Off-road and on-road cyclists compared to park cyclists had more years of cycling, tended to ride in groups rather than alone (95% vs. 75%, respectively) and rode more often during the week (40% vs. 24%, respectively) and for longer periods of time. The use of protective equipment (helmet, protective glasses, gloves, etc.) was generally higher among off-road and on-road cyclists and lower for park cyclists (e.g., helmet use: 98%, 99%, and 85%, respectively), though injury rates and severity were higher among the non-park cyclists (34%, 44%, and 23%, respectively). Half of the on-road cyclists reported injuries over the past three years and they were 2.6 times more likely to be injured compared to park cyclists. In addition, we found differences in reported injury characteristics according to cycling type: on-road cyclists were 6.5 times more likely to have had a head injury compared to park cyclists.

This study is the first in Israel to describe bicycle rider characteristics, and their safety equipment use and injuries. Policy makers should use the study findings as a basis for developing and targeting appropriate intervention programs in an effort to reduce bicycle-related injuries.