

Cyclists in high risk: traffic psychology and Vision Zero approach for better understanding and solutions

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Objective

The bicycle is promoted as alternative of transport in parts of the world in which, until recently, the car had its absolute reign. But, with the increase of the road cyclists in traffic, morbi-mortality, have increased among them.

Luchemos por la Vida, a non-profit non-governmental association that studies and works in Argentina for the prevention of deaths in traffic, has studied the behavior of road cyclists in the city of Buenos Aires.

Methodology

We selected representative samples of crossroads in the city for observing the behavior of 1.675 road cyclists. This was complemented with focused interviews in order to know the motivation and the risk perception of this group of road users.

On the other hand, the road infrastructure offered to the cyclists and the free bicycles that the city offers have been analyzed.

Results

The cyclist's behavior, reveal that they assume important risks. They don't use helmets (74%), the reflective lights on their bicycles (59%), light clothes to increase their visibility, among others.

Their opinions show that they are largely unconscious of its own fragility in traffic.

On the other hand, important problems are observed in the road infrastructure and vehicles offered to the cyclists.

The consequences are tragic, it's estimated that 436 cyclists died last year in traffic accidents in the country, 6% of the total fatalities.

Discussion and Conclusions

The cyclist's risky behaviors can be explained in the light of traffic psychology providing new visions to better education and enforcement and the vision Zero approach offers solutions improving road infrastructure.