



Australian Cycling Conference

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Ways to improve the on-road relationship between cyclists and motorists

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Abstract

Objective: The purpose of this research was to investigate attitudes and behaviours of cyclists and motorists, examine why cyclists and motorists seem unable to share the road and identify ways to improve the on-road relationship.

Rationale: Adelaide is host to the only pro-tour cycling event outside Europe, an event which attracts international riders and increases the profile of cycling in Australia. Yet within South Australia there is an ever increasing inability of motorists and cyclists to share the road. Attitudes between cyclists and motorists are often aggressive, intolerant and incidents can occasionally be violent.

Method: A structured questionnaire was used that included questions on car status, bike status, opinions regarding cycling collisions and the laws associated related to motorists and cyclists and standard demographic questions. Cyclists and motorists completed the questionnaire and participants were targeted from various age groups and sub-groups.

Results: A total of 26 respondents completed the survey. Preliminary analysis found that motorists have a lack of knowledge about road rules related to cyclists and this may be a contributing factor in motorists' 'road rage' towards cyclists and aggression in cyclists. The main cause of cyclist collisions varied between the groups. Motorists considered the cyclists lack of visibility as the main cause, while cyclists considered motorists only looking for other vehicles as the main cause of cyclist collisions. Further analysis will be conducted on the qualitative responses from both motorists and cyclists.

Conclusion: The ability of both motorists and cyclists to identify the stigma attached to cyclists could also enhance the likelihood of motorists and cyclists being unable to share the road. Greater education for motorists relating to cycling related laws and increased awareness of motorists through 'ride to work' day events may improve motorists' attitudes towards cyclists. Increased visibility of cyclists on the road by increasing cycling infrastructure through additional bike lanes may also contribute to greater motorist awareness and improve the relationship between cyclists and motorists on the road.