# Study reveals higher risk of pedestrian and cyclist deaths in SUV collisions



A recent study conducted by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) and Imperial College London has revealed that pedestrians and cyclists face a significantly higher risk of fatalities when involved in accidents with SUVs or similarly sized vehicles compared to traditional cars. The analysis indicates that pedestrians and cyclists are 44% more likely to die if struck by an SUV, with this risk escalating to 82% for children.

The comprehensive study analysed data from over 680,000 road collisions spanning 35 years, comparing the severity of injuries from impacts involving standard cars with those involving light truck vehicles, a category that includes SUVs, small vans, and pick-up trucks. The findings highlight the increasing prevalence of SUVs, which accounted for one-third of new car registrations in the UK last year, a sharp rise from 12% a decade ago.

The size and design of SUVs contribute to the elevated danger. These vehicles are generally taller, wider, and heavier than conventional cars. The study emphasises that the taller front end of SUVs leads to collisions striking higher on a pedestrian’s body—adults tend to be hit in the pelvis rather than the knees, and children are more likely to be hit on the head rather than the pelvis. Additionally, the blunter front ends of SUVs can cause victims to be thrown forward, increasing the likelihood of a secondary impact or the vehicle rolling over them.

Researchers reviewed 24 studies in total, including 16 from the United States and others from European countries such as France, Germany, and the Netherlands. They estimate that SUVs constitute about 20% of crashes in Europe and 45% in the US. The team suggests that replacing all SUVs with standard cars would reduce pedestrian and cyclist fatalities by 8% in Europe and 17% in the US.

Anna Goodman, an assistant professor at LSHTM and the senior author of the study, commented on the results, stating: “Around the world, we have seen a huge increase in the sale of ever-larger cars. Previous research has found that this trend is substantially undermining progress towards net zero goals. Similarly, our findings indicate that this proliferation of larger vehicles threatens to undermine all the road safety gains being made on other fronts. Cities and countries around the world are starting to introduce measures to discourage the use of these large vehicles, and our study strengthens the road safety rationale for this.”

The research was published in the journal Injury Prevention. In response to the findings, Tanya Braun, director of external affairs and fundraising at the charity Living Streets, said: “It’s clear that SUVs make people, especially children, less safe while walking on our streets. Nearly 50 child pedestrians are killed or injured in England every day, and every one of those deaths is a tragedy. We urgently need more measures to protect pedestrians. We’re urging the Government to invest in active travel infrastructure and safe zones around schools that are proven to help keep children safe from vehicles like SUVs.”

Nicholas Lyes, director of policy and standards at the road safety charity IAM RoadSmart, provided a differing perspective, noting: “The clamour for larger SUVs is associated with demand for roomier vehicles and something sturdier to deal with the UK’s potholed roads. The most important factor in reducing collisions is to ensure people in control of these vehicles are better skilled, rather than outright bans.”

Meanwhile, environmental activists have taken direct action targeting SUVs by deflating the tyres of thousands of these vehicles in cities across the UK, aiming to discourage ownership in urban areas. The group, known as the Tyre Extinguishers, intends to make it "impossible" to have such vehicles in city environments.

A spokesperson for the Department for Transport stated: “The safety of our roads is a priority and there are tough laws in place to stop dangerous driving, no matter which kind of vehicle is used. Our School Street schemes support schools to restrict traffic during pick up and drop off times boosting safety and enabling more pupils to walk, wheel or cycle.”

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0022437522000810> - This study indicates that children are eight times more likely to die when struck by an SUV compared to those struck by a passenger car, supporting the claim that pedestrians and cyclists face a significantly higher risk of fatalities when involved in accidents with SUVs.
* <https://www.iihs.org/news/detail/higher-point-of-impact-makes-suv-crashes-more-dangerous-for-cyclists> - This research highlights that the taller front end of SUVs leads to collisions striking higher on a cyclist’s body, causing more severe injuries, corroborating the article's point about the design of SUVs contributing to elevated danger.
* <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0022437522000810> - The study emphasizes that the size and design of SUVs, being generally taller, wider, and heavier than conventional cars, contribute to the elevated danger for pedestrians and cyclists.
* <https://www.iihs.org/news/detail/higher-point-of-impact-makes-suv-crashes-more-dangerous-for-cyclists> - This study indicates that SUVs are more lethal than cars to pedestrians, with the increased risk traced to the height of SUVs’ front ends, aligning with the article's assertion about the design of SUVs contributing to elevated danger.
* <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0022437522000810> - The study suggests that replacing all SUVs with standard cars would reduce pedestrian and cyclist fatalities by 8% in Europe and 17% in the US, supporting the article's claim about the potential impact of vehicle replacement on reducing fatalities.
* <https://www.iihs.org/news/detail/higher-point-of-impact-makes-suv-crashes-more-dangerous-for-cyclists> - This research highlights that the taller front end of SUVs leads to collisions striking higher on a cyclist’s body, causing more severe injuries, corroborating the article's point about the design of SUVs contributing to elevated danger.
* <https://m.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/uk/suvs-are-more-dangerous-for-pedestrians-and-cyclists-than-standard-cars-study/a1662365595.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data