

On Helmet Laws and Public Safety

With the new Legislative Session getting under way, it is imperative to get the facts about helmet laws out in the open.

It has been stated, by supporters of helmet laws, that helmet law States have lower Fatality and/or lower Serious Injury rates in motorcycle crashes than a freedom of choice State like Connecticut.

This falsehood has been propagated by (among others) the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) for more than forty years, but it wasn't true forty years ago, and it still is not true now!

Unfortunately, many people are unaware of these facts, and sometimes act without checking the sources of their "information".

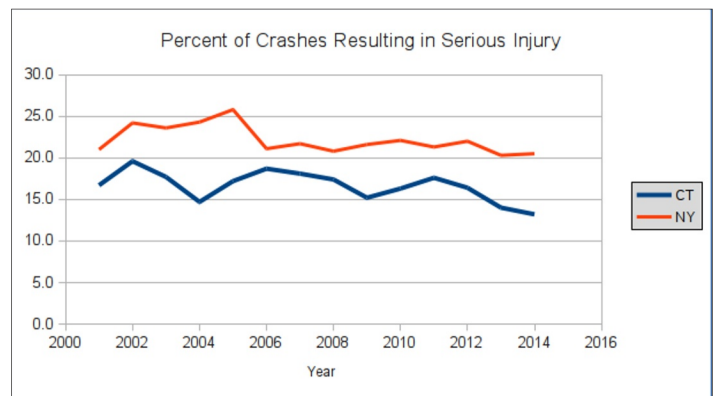
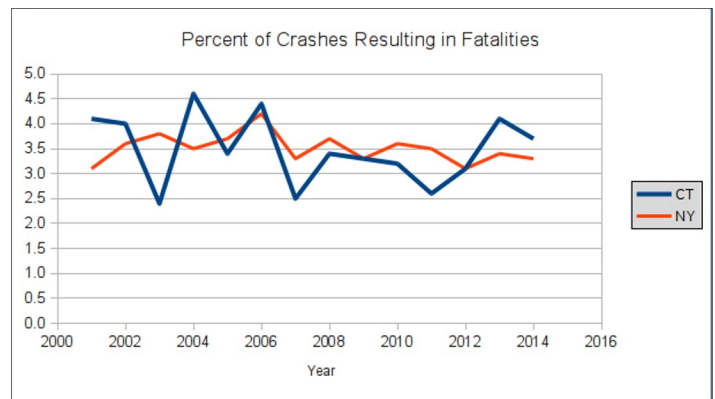
Comparing otherwise-similar States such as New York and Connecticut, which have similar weather conditions, similar infrastructure quality (road conditions), and similar population demographics (such as average educational level), but differ in terms of helmet laws (New York has had mandatory helmet use for all motorcyclists for most of the last half-century while Connecticut has had freedom of choice for adult motorcyclists for most of the same period) shows virtually identical fatality rates: In each State, an average of 3.5% of all crashes involving motorcycles result in fatal injuries (almost always to the motorcyclist). In some years New York has a slightly higher rate than Connecticut, in other years the opposite, but there is no significant overall difference in any year. **Helmet laws do NOT reduce Fatality rates!**

Furthermore, the percentage of crashes resulting in non-fatal serious injuries, such that the person is not expected to be able to return to normal activities, is considerably higher in New York at 22.2% than in Connecticut at 16.6% average for all years. **Helmet laws do NOT reduce Serious Injuries!**

All data is from publicly available statistics taken from the standard PR-1 crash reports filed by investigating Officers.

Motorcycle Crashes:

	NY		CT	
	%Fatal	%Serious	%Fatal	%Serious
2001	3.1	21.0	4.1	16.7
2002	3.6	24.2	4.0	19.6
2003	3.8	23.6	2.4	17.7
2004	3.5	24.3	4.6	14.7
2005	3.7	25.8	3.4	17.2
2006	4.2	21.1	4.4	18.7
2007	3.3	21.7	2.5	18.1
2008	3.7	20.8	3.4	17.4
2009	3.3	21.6	3.3	15.2
2010	3.6	22.1	3.2	16.3
2011	3.5	21.3	2.6	17.6
2012	3.1	22.0	3.1	16.4
2013	3.4	20.3	4.1	14.0
2014	3.3	20.5	3.7	13.2
Mean:	3.5	22.2	3.5	16.6



Data on Connecticut crashes from CT DOT database at:

<http://ctcrash.uconn.edu>

Data on New York crashes from:

<https://dmv.ny.gov/about-dmv/statistical-summaries>