

12th June 2014

Dear Scrutiny Panel

As Emergency Medicine consultants, we routinely see the damage inflicted by accidents involving cyclists. It is our job, and that of our colleagues, to not only save lives but try to make those lives worth living. We are therefore in a prime position to utilise our medical knowledge and first-hand experience to ascertain the effectiveness of wearing cycle helmets and we urge you all to support the proposition to make cycle helmets compulsory on the island.

The evidence is clear – cycle helmets can save lives and prevent lifelong disability. What would have been a major injury involving neurosurgeons off island, becomes a minor stay in Jersey General Hospital. Also, it is prudent to take a common sense approach; surely wearing protective headgear will provide greater protection to one's fragile skull than not wearing one?

It is vital that we do all we can to protect all cyclists, but particularly our children, from these substantial risks and it is our moral duty to ensure they wear helmets while cycling.

Tragically, we see too many children and adults from Jersey injured in cycling accidents whilst not wearing helmets. This has to stop.

As doctors, we support initiatives that promote healthy living. Cycling is to be encouraged and we support the States of Jersey's transport policy which encourages more people to cycle, with particular emphasis on cycle proficiency and getting children to cycle to school. However, with more cyclists there will inevitably be more accidents so now is the time to act and introduce this new law.

The sight of a young child being wheeled into the A&E department in a critical state is hard to bear. The knowledge that the situation could have been avoided or the damage lessened had the child been wearing a cycle helmet is heartbreaking.

One simple, relatively inexpensive piece of equipment can make such a huge difference to the lives of so many people. Not just the injured, but the emotional cost to their immediate family and the financial cost to the Island of Jersey.

Once again, we urge Members of the States of Jersey to take this opportunity to protect vulnerable cyclists, particularly children, from these unnecessary risks and support the proposition to make helmets compulsory in Jersey.

Yours faithfully,

Dr Nick Payne and John McInerney

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