
Surgeons warn of injury risks from Lime scooters

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Surgeons are warning of the dangers of Lime scooters particularly in the lead up to the Adelaide Festival, where a trial of the vehicles is set to begin.

The scooters, which have been a popular mode of transport for only a short period of time since their launch, have resulted in an increase in significant injuries as a result of a faulty wheel-locking mechanism, 2018 data has found.

A total of 88 injuries were recorded over two months across three public hospitals in Brisbane. With 20-34 year-old patients accounting for 66 per cent of cases overall, and a gender breakdown of 56 per cent male, 44 per cent female, 34 per cent arrived at the ED by ambulance, and in 10 per cent of cases surgery was required. Injuries have included head trauma, upper and lower limb fractures, sprained/strained limbs and serious contusions/abrasions.

Chair of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) Trauma Committee Dr John Crozier has said that public awareness of the dangers associated with these vehicles is required and that legislative measures such as the mandatory use of helmets, safe speed limits and age restrictions are implemented.

“We also urge that the safety of pedestrians and other road users is considered in any future decisions regarding the use of scooters as we have seen that the injuries are not isolated to scooter users alone.

Riders who choose to use Lime scooters are responsible for obeying road rules like anyone else sharing the road, including wearing a helmet and looking out for pedestrians,” he said.

Dr Matthew Hope, Orthopaedic surgeon and QLD Chair of the RACS Trauma Committee recommends that formal data collection related to patterns of accidents and injuries is required to be completed.

“Data has been collected in Brisbane for a short period in late 2018 which showed a dramatic increase in injuries associated with personal mobility devices,” Dr Hope said, “I strongly recommend that data is collected in all other jurisdictions to adequately monitor the level and severity of injuries so that legislation around their use can be implemented.”

Earlier this week it was reported that Lime was put ‘on notice’ after a spate of issues resulted in serious injuries to riders, with Brisbane City Council threatening to revoke the company’s permit to operate and hire scooters in Brisbane.

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About the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS)

RACS is the leading advocate for surgical standards, professionalism and surgical education in Australia and New Zealand. The College is a not-for-profit organisation that represents more than 7000 surgeons and 1300 surgical trainees and International Medical Graduates. RACS also supports healthcare and surgical education in the Asia-Pacific region and is a substantial funder of surgical research. There are nine surgical specialties in Australasia being: Cardiothoracic surgery, General surgery, Neurosurgery, Orthopaedic surgery, Otolaryngology Head-and-Neck surgery, Paediatric surgery, Plastic and Reconstructive surgery, Urology and Vascular surgery.

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