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# Re: E-scooter injuries referred to the oral and maxillofacial surgical service at Christchurch Hospital: a retrospective observational study and cost analysis of 17 months of data

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**Re: E-scooter injuries referred to the oral and maxillofacial surgical service at Christchurch Hospital: a retrospective observational study and cost analysis of 17-months of data**

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Sir, we read with interest the recent article regarding the prevalence of e-scooter related injuries that presented to the oral and maxillofacial surgical team in New Zealand by Smit et al. <sup>1</sup> The article has highlighted the increasing problem in e-scooter related accidents currently especially in this modern day and age.

We work in the South West region of the United Kingdom at a level 1 major trauma centre. Our experience is that we have had 13 e-scooter related injuries present at the Accident and Emergency department in the last 5 years since 2016. This is a growing problem and has the potential to cause an impact on the cost-effectiveness and resources allocated by the National Health Service.

The current national guidelines regarding e-scooter use in the United Kingdom is that they are only allowed for personal use on private land.<sup>2</sup> It is still illegal to use them on public roads and spaces allocated for pedestrians, cyclists and horse-riders. The government, however, is currently running a series of e-scooter trials in about 32 counties. These are only allowed at a maximum speed of 15.5mph and one must have a category Q entitlement on their driving license to be allowed to rent one.

E-scooters should also be insured by the rental operator, however they do not need to be registered or pay vehicle excise duty. A cycle helmet and fluorescent clothing are recommended, however, this is currently not a legal requirement. They should also only be used by one person at a time, not be used to tow anything, and should not have anything hanging on the handlebars. Mobile phones are not allowed to be used during the use of an e-scooter, and any navigation information should be set up prior to setting off. One must also not ride an e-scooter while intoxicated or drunk as they can be prosecuted under drinking or drug driving laws which is a punishable offence. <sup>3</sup>

We believe that extra caution and care should be taken into consideration with clear-cut recommendations to ensure the safety of the growing sport and vehicle use of e-scooters before their approval for public use as there is a potential to cause a financial strain on the provision of healthcare services.

**Conflict of interest**

We have no conflicts of interest.

**Ethics statement/conformation of patients' permission**

Not required.

**References**

1. R.B. Smit, D.O. Graham, J. Erasmus. E-scooter injuries referred to the oral and maxillofacial surgical service at Christchurch Hospital: a retrospective observational study and cost analysis of 17-months of data. *Br J Oral Maxillofac Surg* **59** (2021), pp. 439-444.

2. Department for Transport. Powered transporters. Updated 13 July 2020. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/powered-transporters/information-sheet-guidance-on-powered-transporters> (Accessed 11 May 2021).
3. Department for Transport. E-scooter trials: guidance for users. Updated 19 April 2021. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/e-scooter-trials-guidance-for-users> (Accessed 11 May 2021).