

TRANSCRIPT OF MEDIA- OSF doctors warn: E-bikes and e-scooters aren't toys

Charles Aprahamian, surgeon-in-chief at OSF HealthCare Children's Hospital of Illinois

Dr. Aprahamian says with the rise of battery-powered devices, surgeons have seen an increase in injuries, especially among children ages 10 to 15.

"The speeds that can be achieved, especially at 28 miles per hour, 25 miles per hour, it becomes more like a motorcycle and not a bicycle. So the injuries you see with e-bikes versus bicycles because of the increased speed are much more severe – higher chance of broken limbs, head injury and spine injury. So it can be quite severe," he points out. (:24)

Dr. Aprahamian stresses that a lack of experience and control – rather than car impacts – is driving many crashes.

"I think e-bike accidents and scooter accidents are most commonly seen when they're going fast and lose control and cause injury versus somebody else hitting them," Dr. Abrahamian observes. "They're not experienced with either the speed, rules of the road, when to yield, the importance of wearing a helmet – versus what you would go through to have a license." (:19)

Paul Jeziorczak (pronounced Yeah-ZORE-chuck), trauma medical director for OSF Children's Hospital of Illinois

Dr. Jeziorczak says e-bike and e-scooter incidents are starting to overtake other leading causes of serious injury in kids and young adults.

"Because of that added weight, the crash becomes more significant. So you can get entangled and trapped, and that added weight can cause more injuries that a normal bike wouldn't." (:12)

The orthopedic community coined the term 'Lime bike leg' Dr. Jeziorczak says, referring to severe fractures associated with shared and rental e-bikes, including from a company known as Lime.

"If you misstep or try to pedal, that weight can really put a lot of force on the two lower bones in your leg – the tibia and fibula. We're seeing a lot more open injuries where the bone is actually coming out through the leg, causing a lot of soft tissue skin damage, needing a lot more reconstruction. (:21)

The physicians cautioned that risks extend beyond crashes to the batteries themselves.

Dr. Jeziorczak emphasizes there have been similar reports of fires that occurred with hoverboards.

"So if there are any issues with that battery, the recommendations are not to plug it in and go to sleep in your house because they can start on fire. If you smell smoke or something weird when it's charging, the breaker in your house is tripping, don't try to proceed and ignore those sort of things because they have caused significant burn injuries from setting your house on fire." (:22)