

First-time PMD rider broke facial bones

She and doctor call for mandatory use of helmets by PMD users

DAVID SUN

Her first time riding an e-scooter landed her in hospital with shattered facial bones that needed three implants, including one to prop up her right eyeball.

Ms Goh Sook Leng, 33, was flung off after braking suddenly, and crashed face-first onto a rock in the accident last Dec 20.

She told a press conference at Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH) yesterday that she rented an e-scooter at Clarke Quay after a friend suggested that they ride to East Coast Park.

The senior patient service associate added that when they were heading back, it started to rain in the Marina Barrage area.

"I tried to stop when the rain got heavier, and that's when I braked too hard and flew off," she said.

"My friend was out of sight at the time, but thankfully there were passers-by who helped to call for an ambulance."

She did not want to go to hospi-



E-scooter rider Goh Sook Leng was flung off after braking suddenly and crashed face-first onto a rock. PHOTO: SHIN MIN DAILY NEWS

tal at first as she felt it was a minor fall, but the passers-by insisted because she was bleeding from her mouth and nose.

She said: "When I got to the hospital, they did a scan and said I had multiple complicated fractures in my face. I also fractured a finger on my left hand."

TTSH revealed yesterday that it had recorded 213 accidents involving personal mobility devices (PMDs), with a total of 303 injuries, since 2017.

All but six of the cases involved riders and pillion riders.

TTSH figures show 41 per cent of the 303 injuries were in the head and neck area, while facial injuries made up 12 per cent.

Dr Teo Li Tserng, chief of trauma and acute care surgery at TTSH, said the severity of injuries did not change whether the accident occurred on a road or pavement, but safety gear and rider behaviour might save lives.

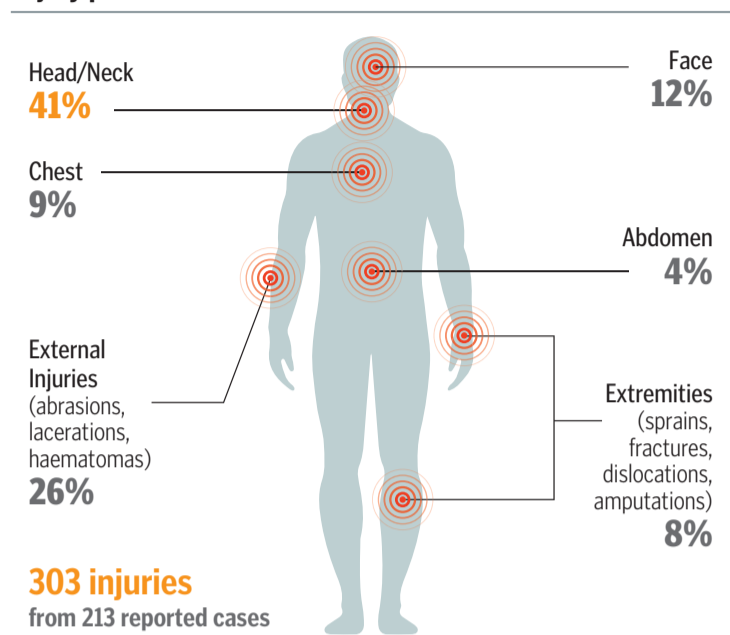
IN PUBLIC SPACES

Of the 213 accidents, 152 were on roads and 46 in public spaces like parks and void decks.

"If you are not careful, regardless of what you hit, regardless of what you do, you are going to get relatively badly injured," Dr Teo said.

"If you cannot change the mode of transport, then we have to change rider behaviour and an

Injury profile of PMD accidents



Source: TAN TOCK SENG HOSPITAL TNP GRAPHICS

individual's protective gear."

He suggested that businesses that use PMDs a lot should protect their employees.

"Now that we have this data that head and neck injuries are really the most common, maybe they might want to take ownership in providing personal safety equipment like helmets as part of a programme to protect their employees," he said.

TTSH's figures show that out of the 46 PMD riders who suffered relatively severe injuries, only seven had worn helmets.

Dr Teo said: "We need to educate riders. I hope we can focus on public education."

Ms Goh, who said she was not given any safety instructions or

gear when she rented the e-scooter, also hopes to see safety gear being made mandatory for PMD riders.

"If I had been given a helmet, maybe my injuries would have been less severe," she said.

"I think it should be mandatory for all riders to wear protective gear for their own safety."

Her injuries required weeks of treatment, including the surgery to insert the implants. Even then, she still feels occasional discomfort in her face to this day.

"The doctors said I was very lucky that the fall did not injure my spine," she added.

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Proper restraints in vehicles key to child passenger safety

TATIANA MOHAMAD ROSLI

Between January 2012 and April 2016, more than half of the children who suffered road traffic injuries were in motor vehicles.

And of these, half did not have proper restraints, said Dr Chong Shu-Ling, senior staff physician at the department of emergency medicine in KK Women's and Children's Hospital.

Lack of proper restraints is especially prevalent in cases involving infants under a year of age, KKH researchers found.

Children aged between one and two years were next, followed by those who were two years and older.

Child passenger safety and safety standards for school buses were the focus of the first School Transport Safety Conference held at the Stamford American Early Learning Village yesterday.

Organised by the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport Singapore, the conference focused on the use of seat belts in school buses and the importance of child passenger safety.

Mr Chandrasekar Palanisamy, group director of traffic and road operations from the Land Transport Authority (LTA), said children are vulnerable road users.

"School children will use different modes of transport to commute to schools," he said in an opening address.

"While there are road safety infrastructures in place, school buses that ferry school children must comply with safety requirements."

From December 2011, LTA has made it compulsory for school buses to install forward-facing seats and retractable three-point seat belts.

Non-compliance may lead to



From December 2011, LTA made it compulsory for school buses to install forward-facing seats and retractable three-point seat belts. PHOTO: LIANHE ZAOBAO

a fine of up to \$1,000, or a jail term of up to three months for first time offenders.

Repeat offenders may face a fine of up to \$2,000, or a jail term of up to six months, said LTA on its website.

TAXIS

Child passenger safety is not an issue limited to school buses, but in cars and public taxis too, said Ms Vera Fullaway, global brand representative and director of customer service at Safe

Traffic System based in the US.

Ms Fullaway, who has more than 35 years of experience in injury prevention education, told The New Paper what might happen if an adult who is not wearing any restraints is carrying a child in her hands.

"A 10kg child will weigh a little over 100kg in restraining force when you travel at 50km per hour," she said.

"In a crash, the child gets hit first and the adult's body hits the child next. There will be no

chances of survival for the child when that happens."

Ms Fullaway said non-fatal injuries can also inflict a heavy blow on both the child and the family.

"Non-fatal injuries can be life-long and debilitating. These are head and spinal cord injuries that people are not able to recover from and will put one in a wheelchair for life."

And because a parent may have to look after the injured child for life, such injuries will also incur huge medical and emotional costs, she added.

On Oct 3 last year, TNP reported that a boy, 10, and a school bus driver, 36, sustained minor injuries after an SBS Transit bus crashed into their vehicle in Bedok.

On July 23, 2013, a school bus carrying nine kindergarten children, aged four to six, hit two stationary vehicles and a bicycle.

The children, bus attendant and driver escaped with minor injuries like bruises and bumps, The Straits Times reported.

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