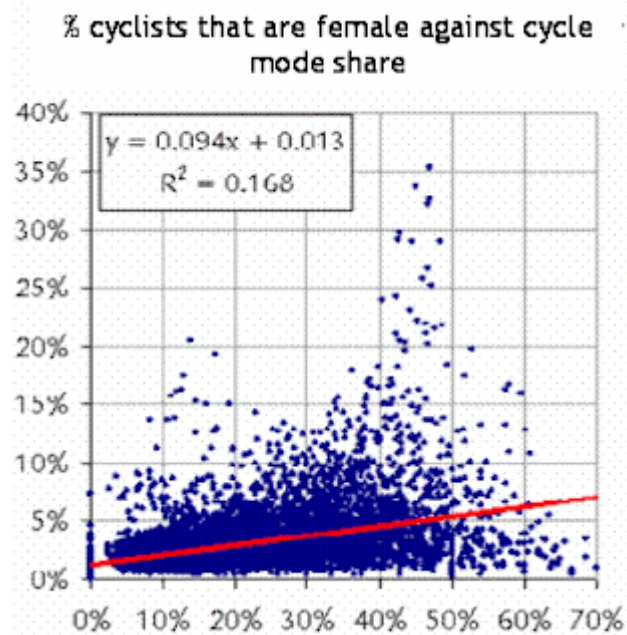


Women - cycle and live!



Mia culpa on the cycling and jumping red lights thing [see silly [Cyclists obey the law and die](#) post]. An excellent analysis by Marianne Promberger completely fillets the figures and trashes conclusions drawn in the media (and reported uncritically by me...) [read her analysis here](#). For London, the proportion of cycle casualties (fatal, serious and slight) has been stable at around 79% male to 21% female since 2002 [[source](#)]. In 2001, the split of London cycle journeys was 73% male to 27% female [[source](#)] - which suggests that men

have *more* casualties per journey. These figures are summarised [here](#).

But a 2005 survey showed female cycling has now risen to 40% [[cited here - ref 4](#)] and this is backed by the evidence of one's own eyes... So this suggests although the female proportion cycling is rising, the female proportion of casualties is stable. It is lower than male as a proportion of trips made *and it is getting lower over time*.

Interestingly, female cycling rates are correlated with higher overall modal share for cycling - see chart from [London Analytics: Gender and critical mass](#) (each point represents a census area for England and Wales). This suggests that women come to cycling when it is a more 'normalised' activity, and as it becomes more normalised the demographics of the cycling population tend to reflect the population as a whole - and it also becomes relatively safer. Where cycling is at a low level, it is the 'early adopters', typically young males, that dominate. The figures show a gradual fall in total cycling casualties in London (down about one third since 1994-98 [[source table 2](#)] combined with a steady rise in total cycling [[data - table 3.5.1 & 3.5.4](#)] of about 50% over the same period.

So perhaps women both seek and contribute to a more appealing and relatively safer environment for cycling. And perhaps testosterone-fuelled young men will always end up in more scrapes.... but increasing levels of cycling,

disproportionately driven by the growth in female cycling, will make everyone a bit safer – not least by slowing down cars and making drivers more aware. Er, I think that means women cyclists might be helping to keep the male death toll down! Of course, individual risk is sure to be dominated by individual cycling behaviour – ie. riding recklessly – rather than being male or female *per se*.

To summarise for London:

- Total cycling is increasing – by about 50% since 1990s
- Female cycling is increasing more rapidly within the rising total – from about 30:70 to about 40:60
- The casualty rate for men is higher than the male share of cycling
- The male to female casualty ratio is stable at about 79:21 despite the rapid rise in female cycling
- The absolute casualty rate is falling gradually but falling rapidly as a proportion of journeys
- Cycling with deliberate care is the best survival strategy for either gender