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Analysis of the 1956 Automobile Fatalities in Iowa by Age, Sex, and Other Factors

By LILLIAN C. SCHWENK

In 1956 there were 697 lives lost in motor vehicle accidents in Iowa as compared with the 606 recorded in 1955. Considering sex, the tabulation shows that 171 females and 435 males were killed in 1955, whereas 202 females and 495 males lost their lives in 1956 through automobile accidents, or an increase of 31 females and 60 males.

Analysis of the results further shows that the age of *drivers* who lost their lives ranged from 7-86! The ratio of male to female drivers killed in accidents is approximately 7:1, whereas the overall fatality list showed about $2\frac{1}{2}$ males for each female. The peak age for fatalities among male drivers is from 18-23. This was about the same for both years studied. Whereas the percentage of male drivers above 60 is approximately 11 per cent, the percentage of fatalities runs slightly above 16 per cent. The percentage of licensed female drivers above 60 is approximately 2 per cent, yet their fatality percentage is 12.5 per cent.

The 20-24 year-olds have been, and are problem children to safety experts yet some interesting figures have been found in the 1956 accident facts for Iowa. In comparing this age group, the two sexes combined, with the above-60 group, it was found that they had identical percentages of drivers killed: 15.7 per cent of the total number of drivers killed, or 363. The combined percentages of male and female licensees in Iowa between the ages of 20-24 is approximately 11.6 per cent; the corresponding percentages for the above-60 group is about 12.6 per cent. Thus we can see percentage-wise, there is very little difference between the records of the two groups.

Eighteen of the drivers killed were males on tractors, four of whom were children under the age of 14. Of the fatalities listed as pedestrians, there were 13 bicycle riders in 1956 as compared with only 3 in 1955. In each of the two years, there was only one girl and one elderly man, the others were very young boys.

Many interesting factors are involved in an analysis of the state accident records, only a few of which are mentioned here. Chi-square tests of significance have been run for the different age groups and are available as are various tables similar to the ones developed for the 1955 figures.

This study is part of a projected long-term study in which composite figures will also be compiled.

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