IDENTIFYING FACTORS EXPLAINING PEDESTRIAN CRASH SEVERITY: A STUDY OF AUSTIN, TEXAS

Elizabeth A. Welch, Corresponding Author
University of Texas at Austin
310 Inner Campus Drive Stop B7500, Austin, TX 78712-1009
Tel: 972-948-0878 Fax: 512-471-0716 Email: eawelch12@utexas.edu

Ming Zhang
University of Texas at Austin
310 Inner Campus Drive Stop B7500, Austin, TX 78712-1009
Tel: 512-471-0139 Fax: 512-471-0716 Email: zhangm@austin.utexas.edu

Junfeng Jiao
University of Texas at Austin
310 Inner Campus Drive Stop B7500, Austin, TX 78712-1009
Tel: 512-471-1922 Fax: 512-471-0716 Email: jjiao@austin.utexas.edu

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ABSTRACT

From the Federal Highway Administration to local departments of transportation, traffic safety is a persistent concern for transportation planners and engineers. Pedestrians are among the most vulnerable road users and require consideration beyond typical analysis of vehicle safety. This study has two objectives: identify environmental, demographic, and behavioral factors explaining crash severity, and compare methods for determining the significance of these factors. Binary and ordered logistic regression models were developed and compared to assess factor significance. Environmental and local factors, such as lighting and speed limit, had the strongest correlation with crash severity in all cases. However, inclusion of driver and pedestrian behavior and demographic characteristics improved the fit of the model and, in some cases, predictive ability. The two model types identified the same significant variables in traffic safety, but the magnitudes of the effects differed by model. This finding demonstrates that while the simpler method may yield the same overall results, combining methods can differentiate factors which contribute to the most severe crashes. These methods require little data enhancement beyond existing police records and can be a model for analysis by practitioners.

Keywords: safety, pedestrian, active transportation, human factors, fatality, injury, regression

INTRODUCTION

Since 2004, the Federal Highway Administration Office of Safety has identified numerous cities and states as Pedestrian Focus Cities or States. There are currently 35 focus cities, including Austin, Texas, which are encouraged to analyze trends in pedestrian crashes, injuries, and fatalities to develop Pedestrian Safety Action Plans (PSAPs) toward reducing traffic injuries and deaths (*1*). These plans evaluate a wide range of variables, culminating in recommendations for engineering, education, enforcement, and policy solutions toward reducing or eliminating pedestrian injuries and fatalities.

Some cities have already completed a pedestrian safety study and action plan, including New York City and Chicago (*2,3*). Many others have used FHWA guidance to produce an action plan toward increased pedestrian safety, but they have not published comprehensive studies of pedestrian safety trends (*4,5,6*). Each study includes examination of those most affected by traffic injuries and fatalities and many include behavioral contributors, such as impairment, speeding, or failure to yield. However, the only attribute of the built environment studied consistently is location at an intersection. Presence of sidewalks, bicycle lanes, land use, or lighting are not often studied. This trend suggests that cities could augment their analysis by conducting a holistic analysis of the surrounding environment, demographic influences, and human behavior.

The motivation of this research is to conduct such an analysis and to identify explanatory variables for injury severity in pedestrian crashes in Austin, Texas. The expected outcome of this research is the basis for a Pedestrian Safety Action Plan for the City of Austin and recommendations approaching modeling of pedestrian safety data. In addition, many practicing planners look to peer cities, leading cities, and their own experiences for direction when creating plans. This work will provide a connection between the literature on safety as it pertains to design and pedestrian vulnerability and the work of practicing planners and engineers as well as a methodology to enhance datasets without extensive data enhancement.

This analysis illuminated which attributes of a crash were significantly correlated to injury severity and attempted to explain whether observed differences in environmental, roadway, behavioral, or personal attributes were significant. Significant variables were added to a model constructed to predict crash severity based on hypotheses related to crash severity. The aggregate predictions of each model were compared to the actual aggregate outcomes as a measure of accuracy in addition to goodness of fit. This paper includes a review of related literature, an explanation of methodology and available data, results of two regression models, and conclusions drawn from the analysis within the limitations of the research.

RELATED LITERATURE

Existing research has found that a wide range of factors may contribute to the incidence and severity of traffic injuries, including behavioral, roadway, and environmental factors. Impact speed is logically the most important predictor of the outcome of a crash involving a pedestrian. Likelihood of fatality at various impact speeds has been studied repeatedly. Stoker et al (2015) summarized four studies which reported exponential increase in likelihood of fatality between 20 and 40 mph (*7*). Rosen and Sander (2009) challenge commonly reported probabilities, citing underreporting of non-severe injuries as one mechanism by which sampling bias is introduced (*8*). While the likelihood of pedestrian fatality at any given impact speed is not certain, all research concludes that the trend is nonlinear and that significant improvements in safety can be made in small speed reductions.

Factors contributing to speed, including roadway design and the surrounding environment, have been studied to determine which designs or interventions may most effectively reduce pedestrian injuries and fatalities. Studies in rural contexts found that an increased number of lanes and increased lane widths were negatively correlated with traffic safety and specifically pedestrian safety (*9,10*). Dambaugh and Li (2011) found that within urban contexts, miles of arterial roadways in an area contributed to reduced pedestrian safety (*11*).

The same study identified environments typical of urban sprawl to reduce pedestrian safety, such as arterial roadways, big box retail stores, strip commercial land uses, and long block lengths. Conversely, pedestrian-scaled retail uses were found to be positively correlated with pedestrian safety (*11*). Typical urban and pedestrian friendly environments with higher population densities, greater mix of land use, and more transit access have been found to have a higher incidence of pedestrian crashes; however, the exposure rate may still be lower due to the increased pedestrian volume in these areas (*12,13,14*). Characteristics of the pedestrian may also increase the risk of a severe or fatal injury when a pedestrian crash occurs. Age, race, and socioeconomic status have all been shown to be associated with the likelihood of a fatality in the event a pedestrian is involved in a crash (*7,10,12*).

While many studies have catalogued the numerous factors influencing pedestrian safety, cities continue to struggle with prioritizing safety interventions pertaining to engineering, education, enforcement, and policy in the context of their local issues. Moudon et al have conducted a study combining these types of factors in logit models with detailed analysis of surrounding land use using GIS analysis (*15*). This research seeks to use empirical data from the City of Austin to determine the significance and relative importance of these many factors in service of developing a Pedestrian Safety Action Plan while providing a simplified methodology requiring little data enhancement.

METHODS AND DATA

Ordinal outcomes such as injury severity have been modeled used many techniques, including ordered logit models, ordered probit models, and multinomial logit models (*10,15,16,17,18,19*). Ordered logit models have been found to be more flexible in their assumptions and more capable of modeling traffic injury severities and health outcomes, which have a similar ordinal nature, than probit models by some studies and were selected for this study (*17,18,19*). Both binary and ordinal logistic models were selected to understand factors contributing to the most severe injuries as well as increase injury severity in general.

Crash data were analyzed with ordinal response variables for injury (no injury, minor injury, severe injury, or fatal injury) as well as with a binary response variable (no or minor injury, severe or fatal injury). The binary analysis was included in light of analyses conducted by the City of Austin and New York City which used the ratio of severe/fatal crashes to total crashes as a measure for how a group was affected by pedestrian crashes (*2*). This is one method of normalizing crash data in lieu of robust pedestrian volume data. Grouping the two highest injury severities can also enable stronger analysis of the most severe outcomes due to the larger number of severe injuries than fatalities.

Data from the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Crash Record Information System (CRIS) database were the basis of this study. Data from 2010-2015 included 1,562 crash records involving pedestrians that could be geocoded (*20*). The records for crashes, individuals involved, and vehicles involved were combined into a single file for regression analysis using a crash identifier. The data were then spatially joined with geographic data from the City of Austin to obtain data for environmental justice areas (as determined by the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization) and bicycle infrastructure present at the time of the crash (*21*).

TABLE 1 Summary of Dataset

Variable	Values	Range	Size	Average
Environmental Factors				
Environmental Justice Area	No (0), Yes (1)	0-1	1562	0.677
Lighting	Light	0	894	
	Dark, Lit	1	483	N/A*
	Dark, unlit	2	167	
Site Specific Factors				
Bike Lanes	No (0), Yes (1)	0-1	865	0.165
At Intersection	No (0), Yes (1)	0-1	1562	0.446
Speed Limit	Continuous	5-80	1338	37.821
Contributing Behavior				
Distraction	No (0), Yes (1)	0-1	911	0.397
Failure to Stop	No (0), Yes (1)	0-1	911	0.041
Failure to Yield (by Driver)	No (0), Yes (1)	0-1	911	0.408
Failure to Yield (by Pedestrian)	No (0), Yes (1)	0-1	911	0.111
Impairment	No (0), Yes (1)	0-1	911	0.093
Improper Maneuver	No (0), Yes (1)	0-1	911	0.076
Speeding/Unsafe Speed	No (0), Yes (1)	0-1	911	0.061
Driver Factors				
Commercial Vehicle	No (0), Yes (1)	0-1	1562	0.02
Driver under 20	No (0), Yes (1)	0-1	1303	0.044
Driver 65 or over	No (0), Yes (1)	0-1	1303	0.072
Male Driver	No (0), Yes (1)	0-1	1361	0.584
Driver Race/Ethnicity	White	1	679	
	Latino/a	2	395	
	African American	3	191	N/A
	Asian American	4	48	
	Other	5	23	
Pedestrian Factors				
Pedestrian under 16	No (0), Yes (1)	0-1	1478	0.097
Pedestrian 65 or over	No (0), Yes (1)	0-1	1478	0.061
Male Pedestrian	No (0), Yes (1)	0-1	1557	0.605
Pedestrian Race/Ethnicity	White	1	786	
	Latino/a	2	420	
	African American	3	269	N/A
	Asian American	4	38	
	Other	5	16	

**N/A = not applicable. Means of categorical data have no interpretation.*

Contributing factors can be reported by an officer in the crash record. For the records with this information (n=911), six binary variables were coded that correspond to the dangerous behaviors identified in the Vision Zero Action Plan adopted by the Austin City Council in May

2016: Distraction, Failure to Stop, Failure to Yield, Impairment, Improper Maneuvers, and Speeding/Unsafe Speed (*22*). Table 1 describes the data available for each variable and summarizes the values present for each.

BINARY MODEL RESULTS

A binary logistic model was used to predict which factors increase the likelihood of a severe or fatal injury in a pedestrian crash, commonly referred to as a KSI crash or a KSI injury. This measure is used due to the relative infrequency of fatal accidents as a method to better understand the factors contributing to the most severe outcomes. Three combined models representing different hypotheses about the factors associated with crash severity were developed and compared to observed values.

Environmental and Site-Specific Factors

A first model consisted only of environmental and site-specific factors. Two versions of Model 1 test the hypothesis that environment and design are the primary determinants of crash severity. Due to limitations in the data, bicycle lane attributes were populated for midblock locations. Therefore, for each record with a bicycle lane attribute, the intersection variable is “0.” Two variations test both variables separately.

Environmental justice areas were included due to the disproportionate injury sustained by people of color when compared to the total population. For example, African Americans comprised 7.5% of Austin’s population in 2014 and were victims of 24.3% of pedestrian fatalities during the 2010-2015 study period (*20,23*). This variable and the subsequent testing of variation by race test assumptions of correlation between race, environmental justice communities, and crash severity. Speed limit and darkness were expected to increase crash severity due to reduced visibility and consequential shortened reaction time.

Site-specific design factors at the crash site were studied to determine which features are associated with an increase or decrease in severity of pedestrian crashes, and how a road might become safer in initial design or retrofitting. Bicycle lanes provide additional buffer space between a pedestrian in the sidewalk area and vehicle travel lanes. Installation of bicycle lanes may also result in a reduced crossing distance (across vehicle lanes) compared to a similar road without this feature. For these reasons, bicycle lanes were hypothesized to reduce risk of severe or fatal pedestrian injury. Extensive documentation of the association between higher speeds and more severe crash outcomes exists (*4,7,8*). In lieu of actual speed data, roadway speed limit was used and was predicted to be positively correlated with crash severity. Finally, presence at an intersection was predicted to be associated with lower crash severity due to slower speeds, driver attentiveness, and pedestrian crossing facilities such as crosswalks or walk signals.

In this model, environmental justice areas and bicycle facilities were not significant predictors of severe or fatal crashes at the 95% confidence level, leaving lighting, location at an intersection, and speed limit as significant environmental variables predicting crash severity. Due to the similar goodness of fit, increased number of records, and significance of all variables, Model 1a was selected as the basis for all further analysis of the binary regression. Crashes occurring after dark, whether in a lit area or not, were associated with approximately twice the chance of resulting in a severe or fatal injury. Higher speed limits were also correlated with higher odds of severe or fatal injury, with each mile per hour increase associated with 5.5% increase in risk of KSI injury.

TABLE 2 Results of Models 1a and 1b: Environment and Local Design

	1a - With Intersections			1b - With Bicycle Lanes		
	Coefficient	z	p(z)	Coefficient	z	p(z)
EJ area	0.166	1.130	0.257	0.051	0.270	0.787
Lighting						
1-Dark, Lit	0.832	5.770	0.000	1.076	5.750	0.000
2-Dark, Unlit	0.773	3.680	0.000	0.907	3.700	0.000
Speed Limit	0.054	7.480	0.000	0.051	6.090	0.000
At Intersection	-0.473	-3.370	0.001	-	-	-
Bicycle Lanes	-*	-	-	-0.237	-0.980	0.328
Constant	-3.449			-3.320		
McFadden's R2	0.100			0.114		
Chi2	153.030			107.490		
p(Chi2)	0.000			0.000		
n	1323			755		

*- = *omitted due to model specifications*

Addition of Human Factors

Two models were developed to test the hypothesis that human factors significantly explain pedestrian crash severity when controlling for environmental factors. Education campaigns and policies proposed often target specific audiences, such as Safe Routes to Schools programs for children, policies increasing driver license renewal frequency, or graduated driver license programs for new drivers (*4,24*). Characteristics of drivers and pedestrians involved in crashes were studied to determine whether differences across groups were statistically significant when considering environmental and behavioral factors. Finally, driver and pedestrian behavior were added to a composite model.

Model 2 tests the association between demographic factors and crash severity using variables for both drivers and pedestrians in addition to factors included in Model 1a. Driver age was predicted to be associated with a change in crash severity due to experience and ability differences across drivers, and no other factors were predicted to be significant. Similarly, pedestrian age was hypothesized to be associated with a change in crash severity due to differences in ability and fragility throughout the lifespan. Race and ethnicity was predicted to be statistically different across groups, with people of color hypothesized to be associated with higher crash severities due to differences observed in aggregate data.

As shown in Table 3, environmental and site-specific factors remained significant at the 95% confidence level when demographic data were added to the explanatory model. Dark, lit and dark, unlit conditions were correlated with a 150% and 140% increase in severe or fatal crash outcomes, respectively. Crashes at an intersection were modeled to be 44% less likely to result in a KSI injury. Only one demographic factor was associated with increased crash severity: pedestrians 65 years of age or older. Older pedestrians demonstrated a 179% increase in association with severe or fatal crashes compared to those under the age of 65.

Behavioral factors documented in the CRIS dataset were selected to align with those studied in the recently adopted Vision Zero Action Plan in Austin, Texas: speeding or unsafe speed, improper maneuver, distraction, impairment, failure to stop, and failure to yield by either driver or pedestrian. Peace officers code these factors based on the officer’s assessment of the crash conditions, and these factors may not be uniformly applied. Each of the contributing factors identified is an illegal or dangerous behavior, and each was hypothesized to be associated with an increase in crash severity.

TABLE 3 Results of Models 2 and 3: Environment, Local Design, and Human Factors

	Model 2			Model 3		
	Coefficient	z	p(z)	Coefficient	z	p(z)
EJ area	0.103	0.580	0.563	0.086	0.340	0.735
Lighting						
1-Dark, Lit	0.919	5.310	0.000	0.688	2.770	0.006
2-Dark, Unlit	0.880	3.460	0.001	0.631	1.560	0.118
At Intersection	-0.575	-3.440	0.001	-0.206	-0.770	0.439
Speed Limit	0.052	6.070	0.000	0.045	3.460	0.001
Commercial Vehicle Driver	0.889	1.780	0.075	1.377	2.030	0.042
Driver under 20	-0.108	-0.290	0.773	-0.700	-1.000	0.316
Driver 65 or over	-0.300	-0.890	0.371	-0.065	-0.140	0.887
Male Driver	0.137	0.750	0.401	0.167	0.700	0.482
Driver Race/Ethnicity						
2-Latino/a	0.019	0.100	0.918	-0.038	-0.140	0.886
3-African American	-0.075	-0.310	0.759	-0.164	0.440	0.661
4-Asian American	-0.983	-1.910	0.056	-0.937	-1.410	0.158
5-Other	-1.183	-1.520	0.129	-1.008	-0.890	0.373
Pedestrian under 16	-0.195	-0.610	0.524	-0.565	-0.870	0.384
Pedestrian 65 or over	1.026	3.600	0.000	0.933	2.370	0.018
Male Pedestrian	0.194	1.170	0.263	0.087	0.370	0.713
Pedestrian Race/Ethnicity						
2-Latino/a	-0.165	-0.850	0.393	-0.386	-1.340	0.180
3-African American	-0.117	-0.540	0.588	-0.275	-0.860	0.388
4-Asian American	-0.805	-1.380	0.165	-1.628	1.500	0.134
5-Other	-1.172	-1.070	0.286	N/A**		
Speeding/Unsafe Speed	-*	-	-	1.284	2.950	0.003
Improper Maneuver	-	-	-	0.203	0.500	0.618
Distraction	-	-	-	-0.235	-0.910	0.364
Impairment	-	-	-	0.756	2.280	0.022
Failure to Stop	-	-	-	0.293	0.540	0.590
Pedestrian Failure to Yield	-	-	-	0.372	1.040	0.300
Driver Failure to Yield	-	-	-	-0.362	-1.210	0.228
Constant	-3.467			-3.329		
McFadden's R2	0.130			0.154		
Chi2	152.330			93.550		
p(Chi2)	0.000			0.000		
n	1031			591		

** - = omitted due to model specification; ** N/A = Not applicable; no records included in model*

Model 3 iterates upon Model 1a through the addition of these pedestrian and driver behaviors. Without removing any previously considered factors, the third model has few significant variables. The sample size is also significantly reduced from previous models (n=1,031 in Model 2, 591 in Model 1) which may introduce a sampling bias based on documentation preferences and practices. Crashes occurring in higher speed limits and those occurring in dark, artificially lit places were still associated with higher crash severities. Older pedestrians were correlated with severe or fatal crashes at nearly the same rate as in Model 2 (154% more than younger than 65). Two behavioral factors emerged: speeding or unsafe speed was associated with a 260% increase in severe or fatal crash outcomes, and impairment was associated with a 113% increase. Location at an intersection was not a statistically significant factor at the 95% confidence interval.

Binary Model Comparison

Models 1, 2, and 3 were compared to determine which best predicted the actual crash severity distribution. Model 2 best predicted the proportion of crashes that would result in a severe or fatal injury in the aggregate. However, the pseudo-R2 value for Model 3 indicated the best fit occurred when environmental, demographic, and behavioral factors are all considered, suggesting that inclusion of some human factors improves the predictive ability of a model for pedestrian crash severity compared to a purely environmental model (Model 1). This model was developed based on a limited sample size compared to others, and included many insignificant variables. To arrive at a strong predictive model, the findings of this analysis should be considered when determining which insignificant variables to remove.

TABLE 4 Comparison of Binary Model Predictions

	Actual	Model 1a	Model 1b	Model 2	Model 3
Ratio No/Minor Injury	0.761	0.735	0.679	0.746	0.790
Ratio Severe/Fatal Injury	0.239	0.265	0.321	0.254	0.210
McFadden’s R2	-	0.100	0.114	0.130	0.154

ORDINAL MODEL RESULTS

Ordinal or ordered logistic models predict associations with moving to a higher crash severity, such as increasing from “minor” to “severe” or from “severe” to “fatal.” This type of model may provide more granular insight into factors contributing to crash severity. The approach taken for binary models was repeated for ordinal to provide a comparison between the efficacies of the two types.

Environmental and Site-Specific Factors

The first ordinal model tested the hypothesis that environment and design are the primary determinants of crash severity and included factors found to be associated with a change in crash severity in initial screening. As in the binary analysis, two models were developed to account for the relationship between bicycle lanes and intersections in the dataset. The same significant variables were identified as in the binary model, indicating a significant effect for both the most severe injuries and across the spectrum of severity. Again, Model 1a was the basis of the subsequent analysis of factors.

Crashes occurring after dark, in both lit and unlit scenarios, were approximately 75% more likely to results in a higher crash severity. One mile per hour increase in speed limit is associated with a 5.7% increase in odds for a higher severity crash (compared to 5.5% in the binary model). Location at an intersection was correlated with a 34% reduction in likelihood of increased crash severity.

TABLE 5 Results of Models 1a and 1b: Environment and Local Design

	1a - With Intersections			1b - With Bicycle Lanes		
	Coefficient	z	p(z)	Coefficient	z	p(z)
EJ area	0.099	0.870	0.386	-0.089	-0.580	0.559
Lighting						
1-Dark, Lit	0.565	4.720	0.000	0.757	4.730	0.000
2-Dark, Unlit	0.569	3.020	0.002	0.663	3.030	0.002
Speed Limit	0.056	9.050	0.000	0.054	7.640	0.000
At Intersection	-0.426	-3.890	0.000	-*	-	-
Bicycle Lanes	-	-	-	-0.038	-0.210	0.836
Cutoff Minor	0.659			0.628		
Cutoff Severe	3.292			3.162		
Cutoff Fatal	4.989			4.749		
McFadden's R2	0.052			0.060		
Chi2	159.230			109.100		
p(Chi2)	0.000			0.000		
n	1323			755.0		

*- = *omitted due to model specifications*

Addition of Human Factors

Characteristics and behavior of drivers and pedestrians were not predicted to be different when considering all severity levels rather than only severe or fatal injuries. Consistent with this hypothesis, aging pedestrian was the only demographic factor associated with a change in risk for higher injury in Model 2. Pedestrians 65 or over were found to have 120% higher likelihood of increased crash severity, compared to 179% higher likelihood of severe or fatal injury observed in the binary model. This finding may indicate heightened vulnerability to the most severe injuries in particular.

In addition to the three behavioral factors identified in the binary model development, a fourth, distraction, was found to be significant at the 90% confidence level. Distraction by drivers or pedestrians can result in delayed reaction time or inability to perceive others on the roadway, but it can be difficult to detect by law enforcement and may to an extent rely on self-reporting. This could be one reason why distraction was not significantly associated with severe or fatal injuries but was when all injury levels are considered.

Consistent with the binary model, speeding or unsafe speed and impairment were the two significant factors once behavioral factors were added to create Model 3. Again, sample size was reduced substantially by the introduction of these factors and few variables were significant. Speeding or unsafe speed was associated with 175% higher odds of increased crash severity, compared to a 260% increase observed in the binary model. Impairment correlated to an 86% increase in odds of higher crash severity, compared to 113% in the binary model. These findings suggest that the increased risk of higher crash severity due to these behaviors is more pronounced for the most severe injuries.

TABLE 6 Results of Models 2 and 3: Environmental, Local Design, and Human Factors

	Model 2			Model 3		
	Coefficient	z	p(z)	Coefficient	z	p(z)
EJ area	0.139	1.030	0.303	0.068	0.380	0.704
Lighting						
1-Dark, Lit	0.672	4.770	0.000	0.359	1.850	0.064
2-Dark, Unlit	0.560	2.470	0.014	0.111	0.340	0.733
At Intersection	-0.497	-3.900	0.000	-0.314	1.670	0.094
Speed Limit	0.054	7.670	0.000	0.046	4.480	0.000
Commercial Vehicle Driver	0.790	1.780	0.075	1.366	2.500	0.019
Driver under 20	0.131	0.470	0.641	-0.027	-0.070	0.945
Driver 65 or over	-0.097	-0.410	0.682	-0.241	-0.760	0.447
Male Driver	0.114	0.920	0.359	-0.003	-0.020	0.985
Driver Race/Ethnicity						
2-Latino/a	-0.096	-0.660	0.509	-0.145	-0.730	0.463
3-African American	-0.230	-1.180	0.238	-0.397	-1.460	0.144
4-Asian American	-0.576	-1.810	0.071	-0.404	-1.060	0.288
5-Other	-0.576	-1.350	0.176	-0.478	-0.780	0.438
Pedestrian under 16	0.186	0.890	0.376	0.074	0.220	0.824
Pedestrian 65 or over	0.635	2.530	0.011	0.292	0.880	0.379
Male Pedestrian	0.085	0.670	0.502	-0.014	-0.080	0.935
Pedestrian Race/Ethnicity						
2-Latino/a	-0.185	-1.230	0.217	-0.280	-1.360	0.174
3-African American	-0.056	-0.330	0.742	-0.106	-0.450	0.656
4-Asian American	-0.235	-0.680	0.495	-0.203	-0.470	0.636
5-Other	-0.415	-0.750	0.452	-0.688	-1.060	0.287
Speeding/Unsafe Speed	-*	-	-	1.011	2.640	0.008
Improper Maneuver	-	-	-	-0.130	-0.390	0.693
Distraction	-	-	-	0.018	0.100	0.922
Impairment	-	-	-	0.622	2.110	0.035
Failure to Stop	-	-	-	0.552	1.390	0.166
Pedestrian Failure to Yield	-	-	-	0.393	1.350	0.178
Driver Failure to Yield	-	-	-	-0.036	-0.180	0.858
Cutoff Minor	0.674			0.246		
Cutoff Severe	3.337			3.106		
Cutoff Fatal	5.015			4.862		
McFadden's R2	0.062			0.056		
Chi2	146.670			73.590		
p(Chi2)	0.000			0.000		
n	1031			600		

** - = omitted due to model specifications*

Comparing Ordinal Models

Ordinal Models 1, 2, and 3 were compared to determine which best predicts crash severity. Model 2 most closely predicts minor injuries and fatalities, and is near to Model 3's performance in predicting severe injuries. The pseudo-R2 value for Model 2 is the highest of the ordinal models, though it is notably lower than the binary models. Based on this analysis, models with consideration of human characteristics and behavior will perform better than those with environmental variables only. However, as with the binary analysis, these models should be refined to include only variables of interest to the application to increase the predictive power and better understand the relationship between variables.

TABLE 7 Comparing Ordinal Models

	Actual	Model 1a	Model 1b	Model 2	Model 3
Ratio No Injury	0.2286	0.192	0.169	0.202	0.217
Ratio Minor Injury	0.5327	0.532	0.497	0.532	0.571
Ratio Severe Injury	0.1761	0.201	0.227	0.192	0.162
Ratio Fatality	0.0627	0.074	0.107	0.073	0.050
McFadden's R2	-	0.052	0.060	0.062	0.056

CONCLUSIONS

Binary and ordinal models developed here tested the hypothesis that the addition of human factors to models of pedestrian safety would improve performance. In both cases, the purely environmental model had the lowest predictive value. In both binary and ordinal cases, the addition of driver and pedestrian characteristics revealed that aging pedestrians are the only demographic group associated with increased odds of higher injury severity when controlling for other factors.

Behavioral factors were associated with a larger increase in odds of high severity injury in the binary model than in the ordinal model. This may explain why addition of behavior increased the goodness of fit for the binary model but not for the ordinal model. Speeding or unsafe speed and impairment may be factors in higher severity injuries, or reporting may change across the range of injuries. More research on the reporting and attribution of these factors is needed to determine the cause of the difference.

This research suggests that while education and enforcement regarding behavioral contributors to pedestrian crash severity are important components of severity reduction, a focus on improving the built environment is more likely to be associated with positive results. Similarly, citywide studies of the types of people involved may or may not reveal significant differences across demographic groups, but for most groups no inherent susceptibility exists.

Another finding of this research is the similarity between the binary and ordinal models. The same variables were significant for both the most severe injuries and for differences between tiers of injuries, but the magnitude of their effects differs between model types. Depending on the objective of modeling crash severity, cities may seek to simplify analysis by looking at factors contributing to the most severe injuries. However, a combination of both binary and ordinal models can reveal the difference in effect magnitude and identify factors which contribute most strongly to severe and fatal injuries.

This study focused on crash severity in the interest of understanding and eliminating the most severe injuries. Additional research on crash incidence and its nexus with severity are necessary to form comprehensive recommendations for Austin and other cities. For example, the FHWA has reported pedestrian crashes as the leading cause of death and injury for children, reporting that crashes frequently occur on neighborhood streets near their homes (*4*). However, this research did not suggest increased risk of high severity for children in the event of a crash. This gap supports the argument for combined frequency and severity modeling.

Crash severity modeling provides one tool for understanding how cities can approach reducing and eliminating traffic crashes. Models such as the ones developed here can provide insight into the environmental and individual factors contributing to traffic injuries and fatalities with minor enhancements to existing data sources such as local police reports. Each crash is unique, and creating a perfect model to predict human behavior may not be attainable. However, it is also not necessary. Patterns in transportation infrastructure, the built environment, and affected populations exist and provide a path forward toward improving the safety of cities and of people.

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