EM0201: The Globe and Mail, January 4, 2002, page A5

Study advocates seat belts for rear-seat passengers

About four in five deaths of front-seat car occupants could be prevented if rear-seat passengers wore seat belts, says a Japanese study published in the British medical weekly *The Lancet*.

Unbelted rear-seat passengers hitting the back of the front seat can cause "immense" impact on the driver or front-seat passenger, the study states, based on data collected over a five-year period from about 100,000 car accidents in Japan in which there were at least two rear-seat passengers.

Estanislao Oziewicz

The *abstract* in the original journal article, for which the reference is given below, is:

The risk of death of unbelted rear-seat occupants is obviously increased in car crashes. However, there is little epidemiological evidence that unbelted rear-seat occupants will also increase the risk of death of front-seat passengers. We compared risk of death and severe injury of front-seat occupants in car crashes with belted or unbelted rear-seat passengers. The risk of death of belted front-seat occupants with unbelted rear-seat passengers was raised nearly five-fold. If rear seat-belts had been used, almost 80% of deaths of belted front-seat occupants could have been avoided. Rear seatbelt use should be encouraged for the safety of all car occupants.

REFERENCE: Ichikawa, Masao, Nakahara, Shinji and Wakai, Susumu: Mortality of front-seat occupants attributable to unbelted rear-seat passengers in car crashes. *The Lancet* **359**(#9300): January 5, 43-44 (2002).
[DC Library electronic journal]

The article EM0201 reprinted above is used in Chapter 2 of the STAT 231 Course Materials.

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