

Overview

[The Global Health Education and Learning Incubator at Harvard University](#) (GHELI) supports interdisciplinary education about world health through the production, curation, and dissemination of educational public goods. This exemplar work was a final project for “World Health: Challenges and Opportunities,” a General Education course at Harvard College taught by GHELI Faculty Director Sue J. Goldie. For this creative assessment designed with support from GHELI, students systematically analyze a societal health challenge they care about and create a “real world” product intended to influence policy or motivate change.

Abstract

A PSA video aims to reduce electric scooter-related injuries at Harvard by educating about the risks of scooter riding.

Artist

Sophia Scott (2024)


Caption

In recent years, electric scooter usage has risen in popularity as a result of how practical and versatile these micromobility devices are, especially in urban settings like college campuses. But along with the increased prevalence of e-scooters has come an influx of severe accidents, contributing to a major public health crisis and soaring healthcare costs related to such injuries. The populations that tend to suffer the most e-scooter related injuries are young people, males, and people who do not wear helmets—much like the scooter riders among Harvard’s student body. Many Harvard students, especially athletes, ride electric scooters on campus because the shuttle system is unreliable and infrequent, so they need another way to get to and from the athletic complex consistently. This problem-inspired product—a video public service announcement—aims to help mitigate this global health challenge by heightening riders’ awareness of the severe injuries that can result from e-scooter-riding. It also serves to encourage Harvard administrators to increase the reliability of the shuttle system so that students do not feel the need to resort to e-scooter use to get to class and practice on time.

Artist Lens

Last year, one of my friends got into a very serious scooter accident on her way back from a practice. I saw her face bloody and badly injured. She was in tears from the pain of her injuries. Around that time, I had been considering getting a scooter to get around campus faster because I had classes at the Science and Engineering Complex in Allston, but I was often late due to the unreliable shuttle schedule. However, any thoughts I had of getting a scooter instantly evaporated the second I saw the extent and severity of my friend’s injuries immediately after her accident.

From the video interviews I did for this project, I learned—anecdotally—that many people on Harvard’s campus know that scooter accidents are very common, but that knowledge has not dissuaded them from riding their scooters, often without helmets. However, I know from personal experience that seeing the intensity of



injuries from a scooter accident effectively changed the way I thought about the risk of riding a scooter on campus. This epiphany led me to choose a visual medium for my project in hopes of having the same impact on others by changing their thinking about the risk of riding a scooter. I intentionally chose graphic and unsettling imagery to better engage my audience and motivate behavioral changes related to promoting scooter safety.

My intended target audience is Harvard scooter riders and administrators. The changes in behavior I am hoping to inspire are two-fold. First, I hope my video will promote less scooter riding or at least greater use of safety gear among riders. Second, I hope my video will urge Harvard administrators to increase the frequency of shuttles to and from the campus athletic complex so that students will not feel like scooters are their only option to get to class or practice on time. The changes in thinking that I am hoping to inspire are that scooter accidents 1) can happen to you, and 2) can affect your ability to participate in sports. This second message is especially salient for my target audience because many scooter riders are athletes. I hope to drive this point home through the clips of athletes who mentioned that their scooter accident injuries prevented them from being able to participate fully in their sports or even made them unable to play all season.

Media

Video



Many Harvard students just like you have been seriously injured while riding electric scooters on campus.

[View E-Scooter Injuries at Harvard University](#)