

SCOOTER ACCIDENTS CAN CAUSE SEVERE EYE INJURIES



Over the past several years, our Division of Ophthalmic Plastic and Reconstructive Surgical team led by **Don O. Kikkawa, MD**, has seen an uptick in the number of patients brought into emergency rooms for accidents from scooter collisions.

These electric standing scooters (e-scooters) have been popular in cities and on college campuses worldwide for being convenient but they can go very fast, leading to crashes. According to the California DMV, the maximum speed limit scooters may be driven is 15 mph, but they can go much faster. The ensuing injuries are often sight threatening and bad enough that surgery is required.

Physician scientists, working with Dr. Kikkawa, reviewed data on 34 patients with facial injuries, all resulting from e-scooter accidents, from UC San Diego Health emergency departments in La Jolla and Hillcrest over a year's time. Reporting in the publication *Ophthalmology*, the team found that 90%

had one or more facial fractures around the eye; 12% had injuries to both eyes; 24% needed surgery and three-quarters required hospitalization.

Some of the injuries included: eyelid lacerations, retinal hemorrhage and high intra-ocular pressure. Demographically, 74% were male with a mean age of 36.7 years.

Dr. Kikkawa stated, "This study demonstrates the need for more research on the public health safety impact of e-scooters and wearing helmets. We were able to treat these patients' injuries immediately and will follow them closely for future repercussions to vision."

An important item to note: none of the patients had been wearing helmets and 74% of the riders were under the influence of alcohol or drugs. According to the California DMV, it is not a law to wear a helmet when riding an electric scooter but is preferred for safety purposes.

Other SEI authors on the study include: Adeleh Yarmohammadi, MD, **Sally L. Baxter, MD, MSc**, Lilangi S. Ediriwickrema, MD, MS, **Catherine Y. Liu, MD, PhD** and **Bobby S. Korn, MD, PhD**.



*Shiley Eye PGY-4 resident
Adeleh Yarmohammadi, MD
on an electric scooter*