

■研究最前線

バイオメカニクスと自動車安全の研究 ・ Research on Biomechanics and Automotive Safety

力学の視点から 効果的な被害軽減を探る

怪我のない安心安全な社会を目指して

Exploring Effective Damage Reduction from the Perspective of Mechanics

For a Safe and Secure Society Without Injury

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● Faculty of Societal Safety Sciences — Associate Professor *Daisuke Ito*

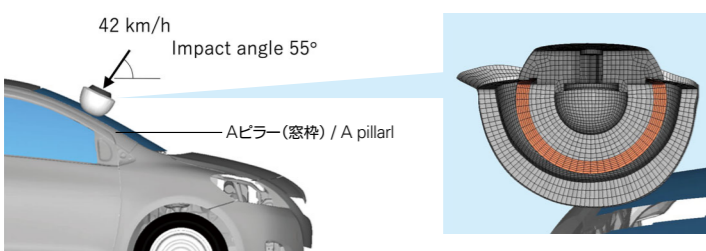
自動車事故で歩行者や自転車と衝突した時、どのようなメカニズムで傷害が起きるのか。また、自転車乗車時にヘルメットを着用することで、衝突時に頭部をどれだけ守ることができるのか。社会安全学部の伊藤大輔准教授は、力学的アプローチで、交通事故やスポーツ傷害などの身近な怪我まで探究。自動運転装置の普及など近未来も見据え、安心安全な社会づくりを目指している。

What kind of mechanism causes injuries when a car collides with pedestrians or cyclists in a car crash? Also, how much can the head be protected in a collision by wearing a helmet when riding a bicycle? Daisuke Ito, Associate Professor at the Faculty of Societal Safety Sciences, uses a mechanics-based approach to explore familiar injuries such as traffic accidents and sports injuries. With an eye on developments expected to occur in the near future, such as the spread of autonomous driving devices, he aims to create a safe and secure society.

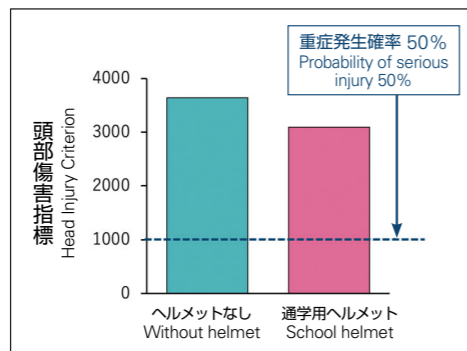
多方向衝撃保護システム (MIPS) を搭載したGIRO社の新型ヘルメット ▶
GIRO's new helmet with multi-directional impact protection system (MIPS)



▼サイクリスト衝突でのヘルメットの効果 : The effect of a helmet on cyclist collision

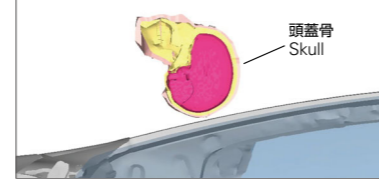


●自動車対自転車事故を想定した頭部衝撃試験。ヘルメットによる頭部傷害軽減を検証
Head impact test assuming a vehicle-bicycle collision
Verification of head injury reduction effect by wearing a helmet

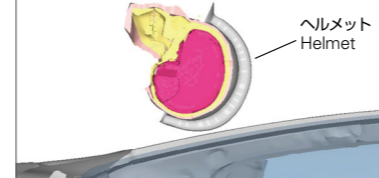


●ヘルメットありでも頭部傷害指標は高いが、頭蓋骨骨折は防ぐことができる
Although the Head Injury Criterion is high even with a helmet, skull fractures can be prevented

●ヘルメットなし : When not wearing helmet



●ヘルメットあり : When wearing helmet



■目の前の課題解決に役立つ機械工学

—専門分野について教えてください。

自動車衝突安全、衝撃生体力学です。機械工学を基に、怪我のない安心安全な社会を実現するためにはどうしたらいいか、怪我はどのように起こるのか研究しています。そもそも事故を未然に防ぐためにはどうすればいいか、事故が起こるメカニズムの研究にも取り組んでいます。

—研究の道に進んだきっかけは何だったのでしょうか。

もともと数学や物理が好きで、高校生の時、私は同じ理科系でも生命や星の誕生より、ロボットや飛行機など対象も幅広く、実際に役立つ機械に魅力を感じました。

大学では、バイオメカニクスの研究室があり、人の怪我を力学的に研究する「モノが壊れるのと骨折は現象・原理では同じ」と考える学問で、卒業研究に選びました。また、大学まで体育会でバレーボールを続け、怪我でプレーできないチームメイトを見てきたことで「怪我の予防や解決法を研究したい」とも思うようになりました。研究室では肉離れの研究をしていましたが、自動車衝突時の人の動きや怪我の発生を研究していた仲間を見ていたこともあり、修了後は一般財団法人日本自動車研究所で衝突安全の研究に携わっていました。2013年に大学へ戻り、自動車の衝突安全の一環としてヘルメットの研究を始めました。また、スポーツ傷害の研究も継続して取り組んでおり、力学的な視点で身近な怪我の原理を調べています。

■自転車ヘルメットの安全性は未開の研究分野

—ヘルメットを着用すれば安全なのでしょう。

自転車ヘルメットの話の前に、そもそも衝突事故における自転車乗員の安全性に関する研究はこれまであまり行われていませんでした。先行して研究開発が進められてきた歩行者保護対策のおかげで、車体のボンネットは人が衝突しても怪我しにくくできています。しかし、自転車との衝突では自転車乗員の持つ速度や向き、姿勢がさまざまであるため、事故実態は分かっていたものの、それを力学的に説明するという視点は十分ではありませんでした。そこで、事故時にヘルメットを着用していた場合、どのように衝撃が頭に伝わるか、その原理やメカニズムを検証した研究を実施し、その内容を論文として共著し、2016年に自動車技術会賞論文賞を受賞しました。

車体のAピラー(窓枠)にぶつかるとう重傷化する傾向があるので、車は時速40km、自転車は時速10kmの想定で、ヘルメットを着用した場合はどうなるのか実験したところ、窓枠に当たるとヘルメットの発泡体がつぶれてしまい「頭部傷害指標が高く、この想定速度では着用していても厳しい」という結果でした。しかし、事故を再現したコンピューターシミュレーションでは「着用していない場合に比べ、頭蓋骨骨折は防ぐことができる」という結論が出ました。

頭部の怪我には頭蓋骨の骨折と脳の損傷があり、衝突で頭が回転した影響で、脳震盪などが起きます。最近では、ヘルメット本体

■ Mechanical engineering to help solve the problems at hand

— What is your area of expertise?

Vehicle crash safety and impact biomechanics. Based on mechanical engineering, I research how to realize a safe and secure society without injuries, as well as how injuries occur. I am also studying how to prevent accidents in the first place and the mechanism by which they occur.

— What made you go into research?

I have always liked math and physics. When I was a high school student, I was fascinated by machines that are actually useful in a wide range of fields, such as robots and airplanes. This interested me more than other areas of science, such as the birth of life and stars.

At university, there was a biomechanics laboratory researching human injuries from the perspective of mechanics, based on the idea that the phenomena and principles behind broken objects are the same as those behind broken bones. I chose this field for my graduation research. I also continued to play volleyball in a sports club through university, and I wanted to research ways to prevent and remedy injuries after seeing my teammates being unable play due to injuries. While I researched muscle strains at the laboratory, I also saw fellow students researching the way humans kinematic behavior and sustain injuries during car crashes. This was one of the reasons that I became involved with the research of crash safety at the Japan Automobile Research Institute after I finished my studies. In 2013, I returned to university and began researching helmets as part of vehicle crash safety. I am also engaged in on-going research on sports injuries and investigating the principles of injury from a mechanical point of view.

■ Safety of bicycle helmets is an unexplored area of research

— Are we safe when we wear a helmet?

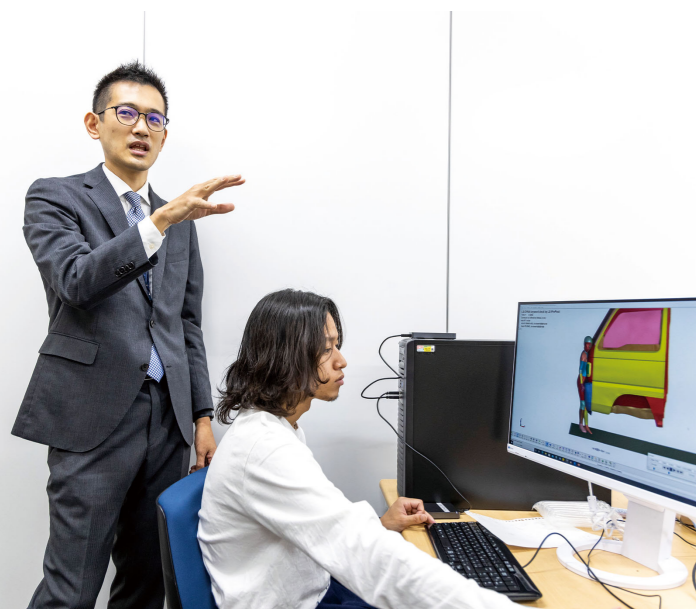
Before talking about bicycle helmets, let me just say that there has not been much research on the safety of cyclists in collisions. Because of the pedestrian protection measures that have been researched and developed ahead of those for cyclists, vehicle hoods are now made to be less likely to cause an injury in a collision. However, the speed, direction, and posture of cyclists vary in collisions involving bicycles. So, even though we could understand the state of the accident, we lacked perspectives to explain it mechanically.

Therefore, I conducted research to verify the principle and mechanism of how the impact is transmitted to the head when a helmet is worn at the time of an accident. I co-authored a paper on the research and won The Outstanding Technical Paper Award from the Society of Automotive Engineers of Japan in 2016.

Since hitting the A-pillar (window frame) of a car tends to cause serious injuries, we conducted an experiment to see what would happen if a helmet was worn at a speed of 40 km/h for a car and 10 km/h for a bicycle. The experiment showed that the foam of the helmet was crushed in collision with the window frame, and that the Head Injury Criterion was high, making it difficult to protect against a collision at this assumed speed. However, a computer simulation



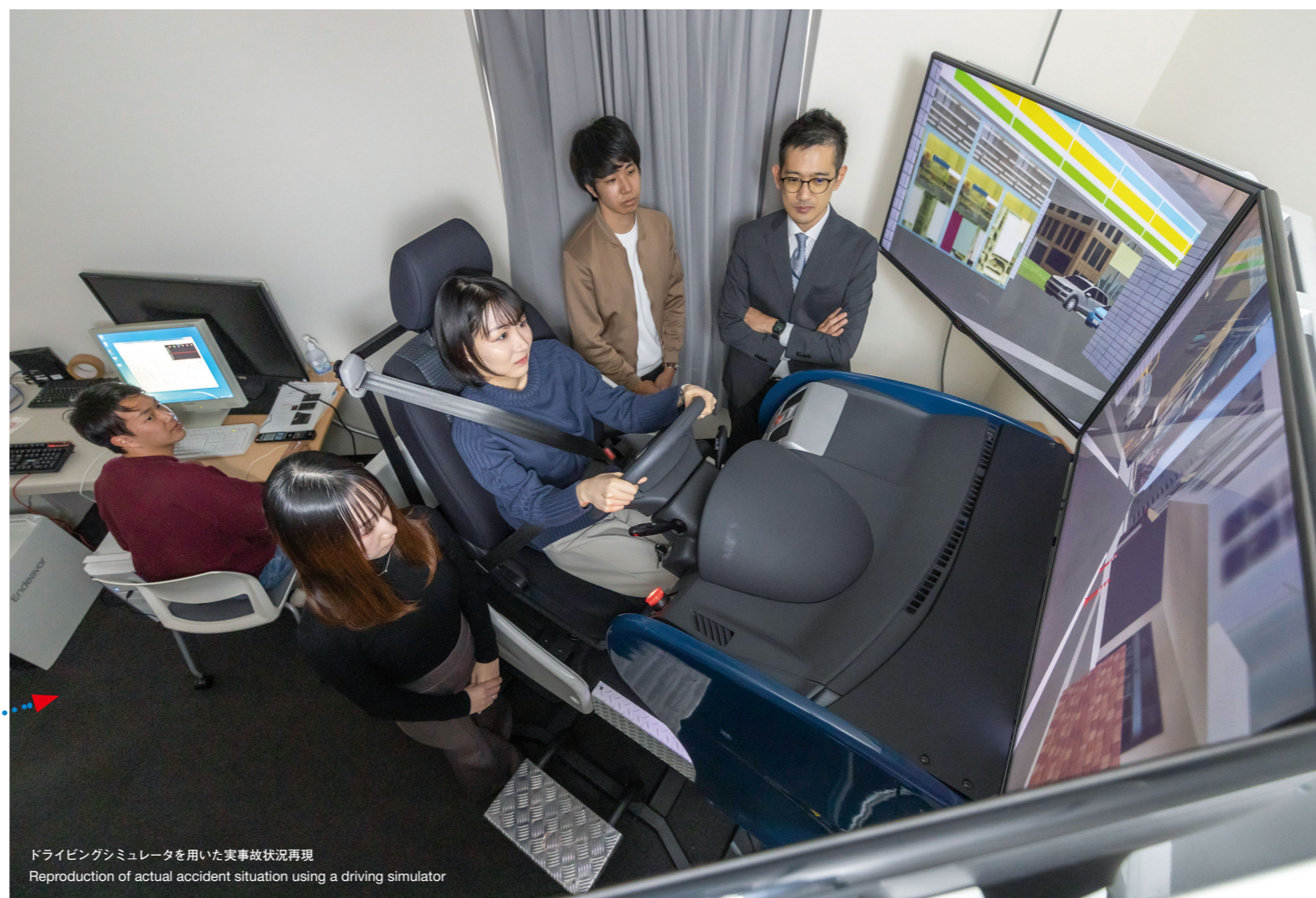
■研究最前線



▲研究室で交通事故シミュレーションを行う学生
A student performing a simulation of a traffic accident in the laboratory



社会安全学部YouTubeチャンネル



ドライビングシミュレータを用いた実事故状況再現
Reproduction of actual accident situation using a driving simulator

と頭の動きを分離する新型ヘルメットが海外で開発され、脳傷害の抑止効果がコンピューターシミュレーションで確かめられていますが、実際の事故でも効果があるのかを調べてみたいと思います。

■ヘルメットの安全基準の新設を提案したい

— 事故防止と安全面の課題はたくさんありますね。
ヘルメットの安全基準の例として、JIS基準で一定の高さから落とす評価法があります。平面床への衝突を想定し、頭部に生じる加速度の低減効果を評価するものです。脳震盪の低減も考えるならば、頭部回転の低減効果も見た方が良く、新たな評価方法、基準の提案も今後の課題の一つです。
「衝突時の対策だけで受傷者は減らせない」は答えとしてあると思います。自動車対自転車の事故原因は、ドライバーの不注意と、自転車の飛び出しに二分できます。実際の事故映像やドライブレコーダを分析して状況を再現し「衝突まで残り何秒なら回避でき

たか」「時速どれくらいだと回避できないか」などの解明を進めています。

■自動運転でも事故は起きる。過信禁物と実証したい

— 自動運転や衝突被害軽減ブレーキにもつながる研究ですね。
最近では、飛び出しに対応する衝突被害軽減ブレーキ付きの車があります。しかし、過去の調査研究から、そのようなシステムが搭載されていても自転車の出合い頭の約7割は回避できるものの、残りは回避できないことが分かっています。自転車出現後1秒以内に衝突する場合も多く、まさに「車は急には止まらない」ので、自動運転技術があっても、ドライバーおよび自転車乗員が今の意識のままだと事故はなくなりません。
「自動運転が普及すれば事故ゼロ」と言われていますが、現実ではありません。海外では、自動運転中の居眠りによる重大事故の報告があります。また、少し前の事例ですが、自動運転技術

that reproduced the accident concluded that wearing a helmet helps to prevent skull fractures compared to when not worn.
Head injuries include skull fractures and brain damage, and head rotation in a collision can cause concussions and other problems. Recently, a new type of helmet that separates the body of the helmet from the movement of the head has been developed overseas, and its ability to help prevent brain injury has been confirmed by computer simulation. I would like to research whether this type of helmet would actually work in a real collision.

■ Proposing a new safety standard for helmets
— There are many challenges in accident prevention and safety, aren't there?

An example of a safety standard for bicycle helmets is the JIS standard, in which headform impactor wearing a helmet is dropped from a certain height. It evaluates how well the helmet reduces the acceleration of the head in the case of a collision with a flat floor. If we were also to consider the reduction of concussions, it would be better to evaluate reduction of head rotation. Proposing new evaluation methods and standards is also one of my future challenges.
I think one way to answer your question is that collision countermeasures alone cannot reduce casualties. The cause of an accident between a car and a bicycle can be separated into two main categories: carelessness on behalf of the driver, and the bicycle jumping out. By analyzing actual accident videos and drive recorders to reproduce the situation, I am trying to find out up until how many seconds the collision could have been avoided and at what speed it could have been avoided.

■ Autonomous driving also causes accidents. Aiming to prove that we cannot be too trusting of the technology
— So, your research is also linked to automatic driving and collision damage reduction brakes.

Nowadays, there are cars with advanced emergency braking systems that respond to bicycles and other objects jumping out. However, past research has shown that even when such systems are installed, while about 70% of bicycle collisions can be avoided, the rest cannot. In many cases, the collision occurs within a second of the bike's appearance, and cars cannot stop suddenly, so even with autonomous driving technology, accidents will not be eliminated if drivers and bicyclists remain in their current state of mind.
It's been said that if autonomous driving becomes widespread, there will be no accidents, but that is not the case. Overseas, there have been reports of serious accidents caused by dozing off during autonomous driving. In another example from a while ago, the sign recognition function, which could be called part of autonomous driving technology, mistook a stop sign for a ramen restaurant's sign. Cases like this show that we should not be overly trusting of the abilities of autonomous driving, and that there are still many challenges.

— To wrap up, could you give a message for the students?
Find what you want to do first. I conduct research out of a desire to reduce injuries and realize a safe and secure society. However, sometimes when you do research you want to do, you sometimes find that you get unpromising results, such as that it is difficult to reduce accidents and damage the way things are now. That being said, there is usually something new to discover in those results, and I think it is important to be able to search for possibilities from those discoveries.
Universities should be places where we can discuss research results with each other, and these discussions sometimes lead to the core of research. I think that it will be an invaluable experience for students to work with other students and faculty members to devote themselves to their studies in seminars and laboratories. I want students not only to come to university to earn credits, but to cherish the extra time that you have only now.