

Yellow taxis less likely to get into accidents: Study

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SINGAPORE: Commuters have a 9 per cent higher risk of getting into an accident when they take a blue taxi compared to a yellow one, according to a study led by National University of Singapore (NUS) researchers.

In a media release on Tuesday (Mar 7), NUS said its researchers analysed data from ComfortDelGro's 16,700 taxis - 4,175 yellow and 12,525 blue - over three years.

Researchers found that yellow taxis had about 6.1 fewer accidents per 1,000 taxis per month, after conducting "millions of observations on the company's drivers and taxis and accidents involving these taxis", it added.

"The higher visibility of yellow makes it easier for drivers to avoid getting into accidents with yellow taxis, leading to a lower accident rate," it explained in the statement.

Over a period of 40 years, the researchers calculated that the average accident rate would be 1.1 per passenger for blue taxis and 1 for yellow taxis.

NUS deputy president of Research and Technology Ho Teck Hua, who led the study, said that the findings suggest that colour visibility should play a major role in determining the colours used for public transport vehicles.

"A commercial decision to change all taxis to yellow may save lives and potentially reduce economic losses by millions of dollars. Our results are also noteworthy to smaller taxi companies and to drivers who use their private vehicles as taxis to work for private hire car services," Professor Ho said.

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The researchers also calculated that if ComfortDelGro converted its entire fleet from blue to yellow taxis, 76.6 fewer accidents would occur per month or 917 fewer accidents per year.

This would generate annual savings of S\$2 million for the company, assuming an average repair cost of S\$1,000 per car and a downtime of six days for each accident.

Prof Ho said the researchers were keen to further study the use of yellow in other types of public transport, such as school buses and private hire vehicles.

The study, which Prof Ho conducted in collaboration with NUS Business School's Associate Professor Chong Juin Kuan and Assistant Professor Xia Xiaoyu from The Chinese University of Hong Kong Business School, was published in scientific journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* on Monday.

- CNA/mz