



Older Passengers: Keeping Grandma Safe

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Introduction

Previous research has suggested that older occupants may not be as well protected in crashes, particularly in seats other than the driver's seat.^{1,2}

Crash tests and restraint design typically do not take into account the needs and characteristics of older adults.

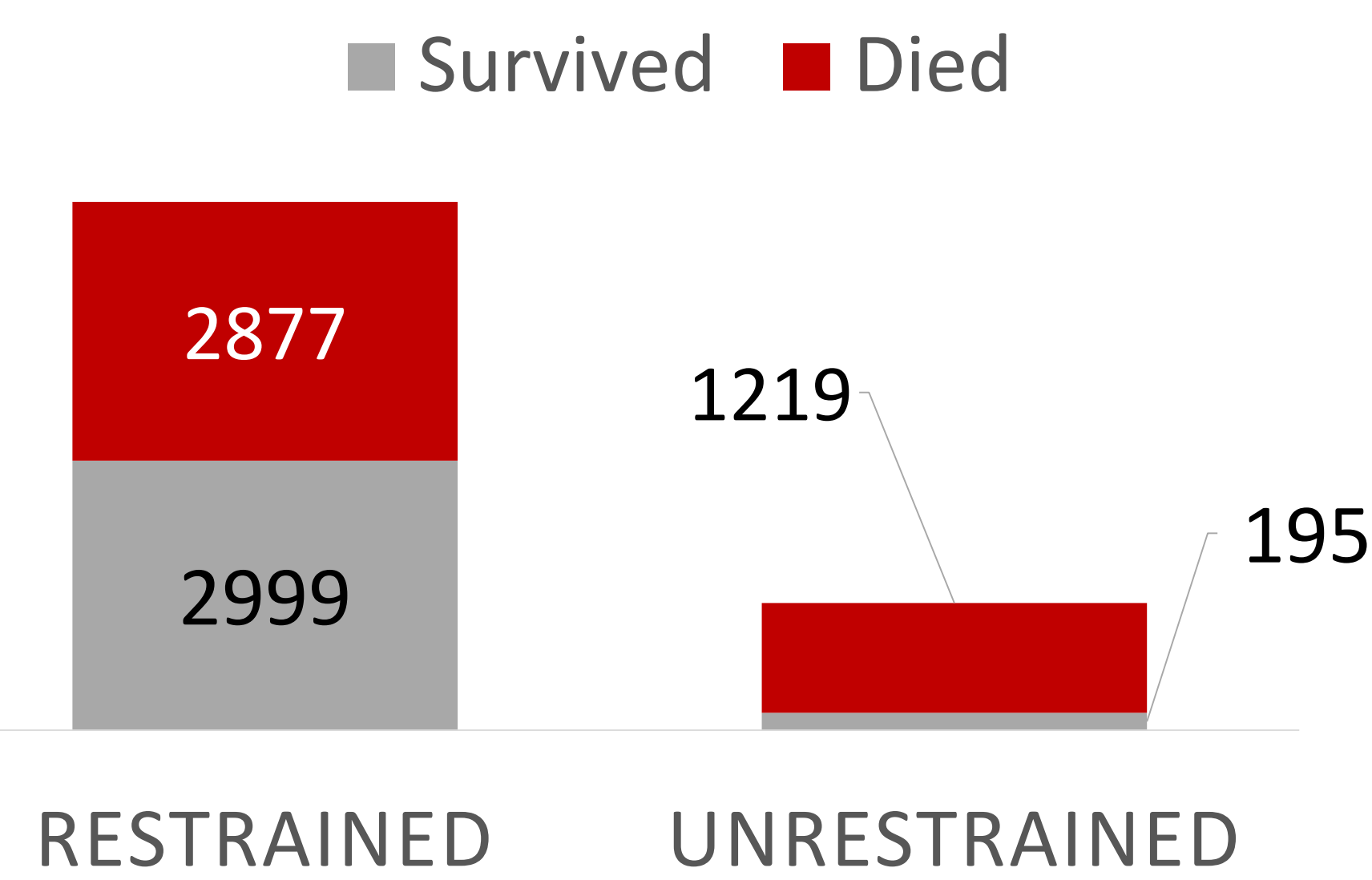
Method

Data set: FARS 2016, vehicle occupants 65 and older involved in fatal crashes.

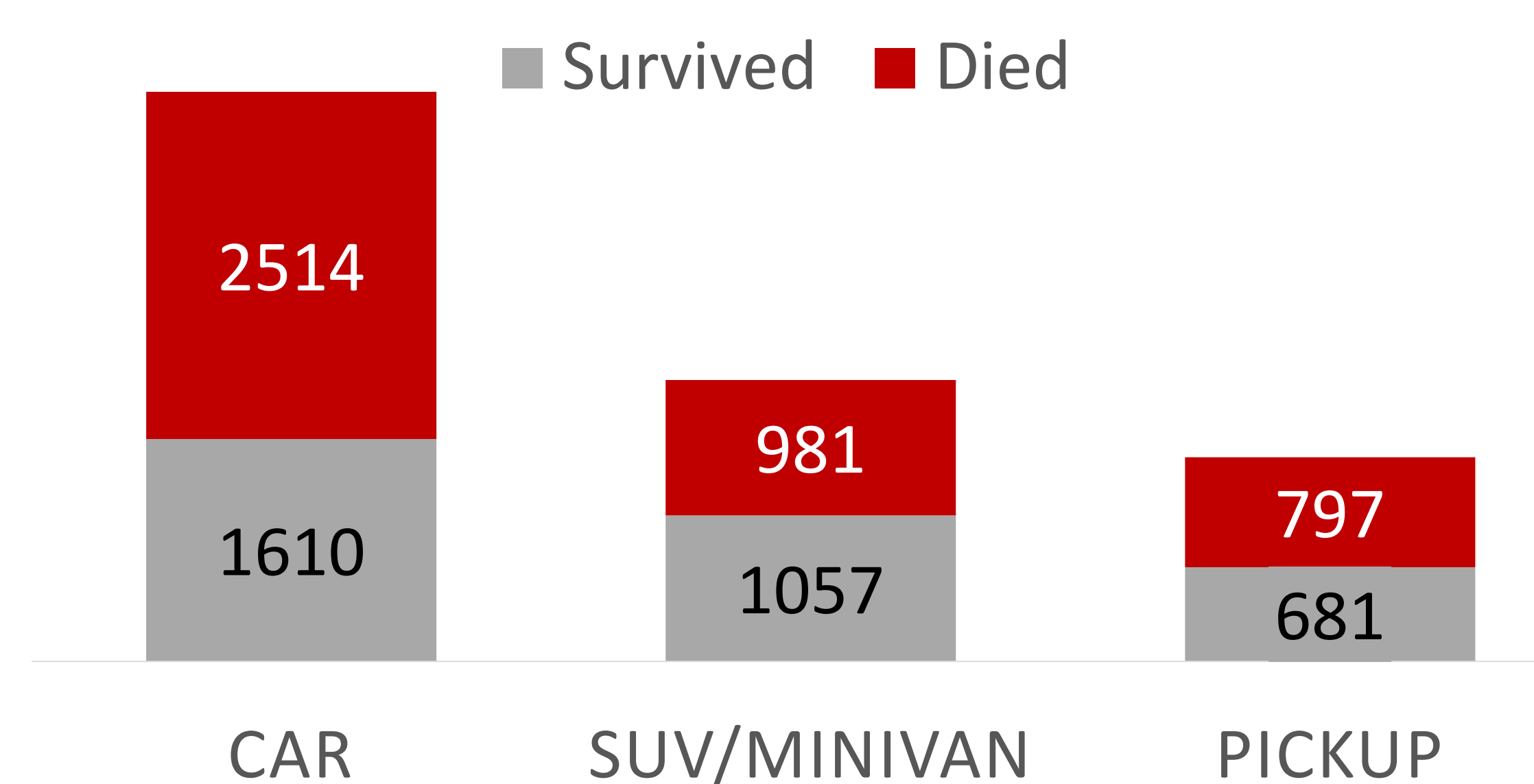
Variables: age, sex, seating position, vehicle type, and seat belt use, subjected to logistic regression to assess effect on risk of death.

Results

Most important: Seat belts

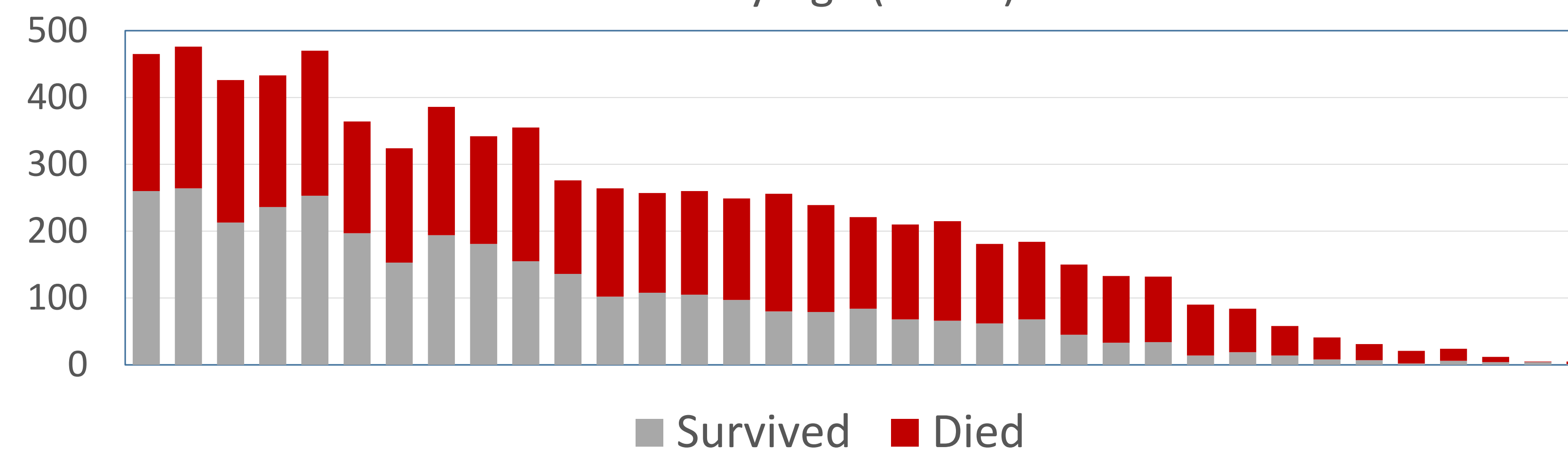


Next most important: Vehicle type

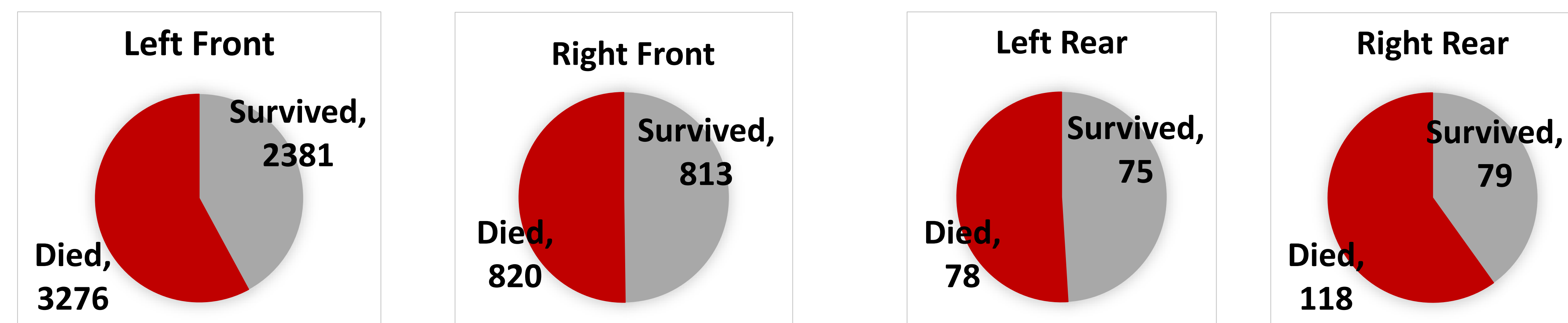


Also important: Age

Outcome by Age (65-99)



Makes some difference: Seating position



Not significant: Sex

Conclusion

Use seat belts: Belted occupants were more than 3x as likely to survive as unbelted occupants.

Drive an SUV, minivan or pickup: Each is about 60% safer than a passenger car.

Choose the right front or left rear seat: These two positions are the safest.

Take extra care with older passengers: Risk increases with age (about 6% per year).

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References: 1 Augenstein et al., 2007.
2 Bilston et al., 2010.

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