**Hospital statistics regarding people who go to the emergency room after roller-skating accidents indicate the need for more protective equipment. Within that group of people, 75 percent of those who had accidents in streets or parking lots had not been wearing any protective clothing (helmets, knee pads, etc.) or any light-reflecting material (clip-on lights, glow-in-the-dark wrist pads, etc.). Clearly, the statistics indicate that by investing in high-quality protective gear and reflective equipment, roller skaters will greatly reduce their risk of being severely injured in an accident.**

**Write a response in which you examine the unstated assumptions of the argument. Be sure to explain how the argument depends on these assumptions and what the implications are if the assumptions prove unwarranted.**

Essay Response:

The argument reaches the conclusion that roller skaters must invest in high-quality protective gear and reflective equipment, to reduce risk of severe injuries. This conclusion is based on the premise that 75% of roller-skaters who got into accidents were not wearing the aforementioned safety gear. However, in reaching this conclusion, the author fails to address three unstated assumptions made in their argument. If proven false, these assumptions could dramatically affect the veracity of the argument’s logic.

First, the argument assumes that the people who went to the emergency room after roller-skating accidents are representative of the entire roller-skating population. But it may be the case that only those who suffered relatively severe bruises were the ones to go to the hospital, that is, it is possible that a significantly less percentage of such people actually sustain injuries, while only a very small portion of people go to the hospital. This would skew the sample space for the data analysis that was done. In fact, the argument fails to specify what portion of these patients had extreme injuries; what if, in the 75% of people that did not wear safety gear, only a few people were extremely injured, while in the other 25%, almost all of them suffered serious bruising? A failure to address this assumption brings into question the very significance of the ‘75%’ number posed by the argument’s author.

Second, even if we assumed that the 75% figure is accurate, the argument still makes the assumption that protective clothing would reduce the number of roller skaters having accidents. However, it may be the case that the equipment currently available in the market is ineffective, and that protective gear impeded skaters from making swift moves to get out of precarious situations. It may even be possible that people who skate at night with reflectors are mistaken for other vehicles, and that drivers do not expect them to make immediate turns in some directions. Moreover, it may be the case that helmets and knee pads restrict the view or movement of a skater, and that people often purchase and adjust the safety gear from other sports for the purpose of skating. Thus, when suggesting protective gear as a precaution for skaters, the author must provide conclusive evidence that such equipment has proven to be effective in other, similar towns.

Third, the author fails to consider other possible causes for the proportion of injured skaters not using safety gear. Perhaps, there is simply no store in the local region that has the required safety gear. It is possible that the skaters are all beginners who are learning to skate, but are doing so on terrain that is not conducive to figuring out how to skate. It may simply be the case that the community of roller skaters in the area does not heed basic safety measures, like, say, not skating on a road full of traffic and speeding vehicles. What if, say, most of the accidents were due to the rainy season making skating parks more slippery, or they were caused by inadequate maintenance of such areas? The author must rule out all these possibilities by explicitly specifying the degree to which protective gear could help, and by showing how all other factors are less important for safe skating.

In conclusion, the argument, as it stands now, is considerably flawed. By making multiple unstated assumptions, it jumps to conclusions based on insufficient evidence, leading to a largely unpersuasive argument. The author must consult a more thorough, comprehensive study about the benefits and drawbacks of protective gear use in skaters, and present substantiative evidence to prove their case. The argument needs an overhaul, and would need to be rewritten with meticulous attention as to how conclusions are drawn. Currently, it has taken the results of a study and drawn a false equivalence between the ‘75%’ figure, and the need for protective gear use.