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07/15/2022

DSC 640-T301

Term Project: Milestone 3

## **Air-Travel: Safer Than Your Daily Commute**



### **How scary is airline travel really?**

I am sure we have all heard on the news about just how dangerous airline travel is, and for approximately nine thousand people from 1985 to 2014 that was true. On average, for the one hundred and sixty-eight people every year who suffer an air-travel related fatality, it does seem very dangerous. However, as scary as that may sound at first glance, without the right context the media's narrative is very misleading.

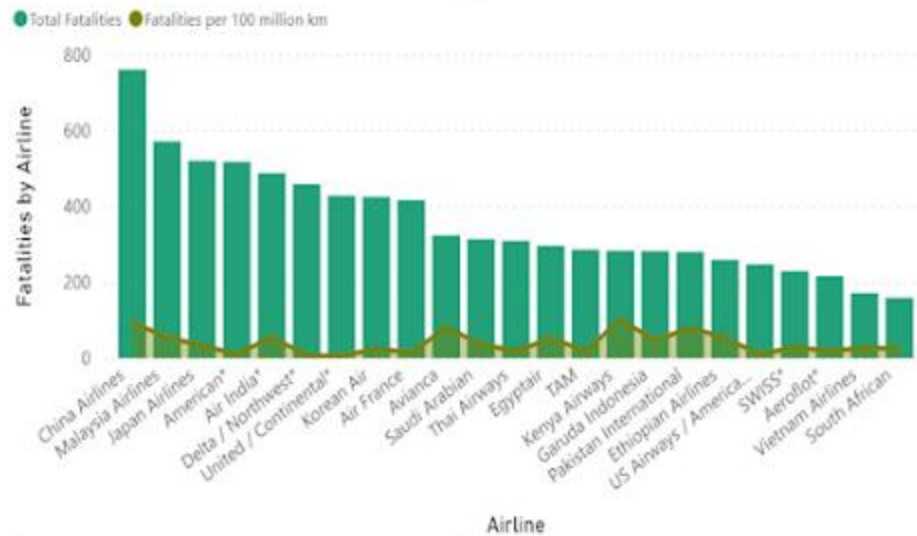


fig 1. The most dangerous airline has less than 800 fatalities total

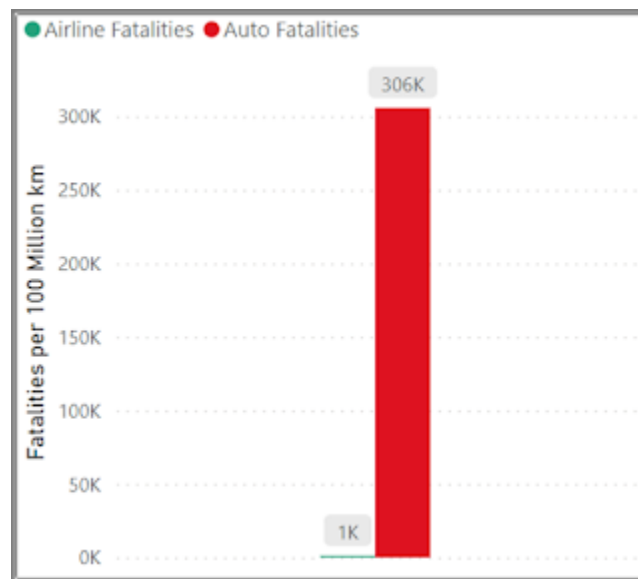
How many of you own an automobile? How many of you drive every day? How many of you take the bus? Or a cab? An Uber or Lyft? What you aren't hearing in the news is just how deadly of a risk you take every single day by getting into an automobile. Those one hundred and sixty-eight airline fatalities every year seem much less scary when you see the average annual automobile-related fatalities: forty thousand six hundred and ninety-five.



fig 2.

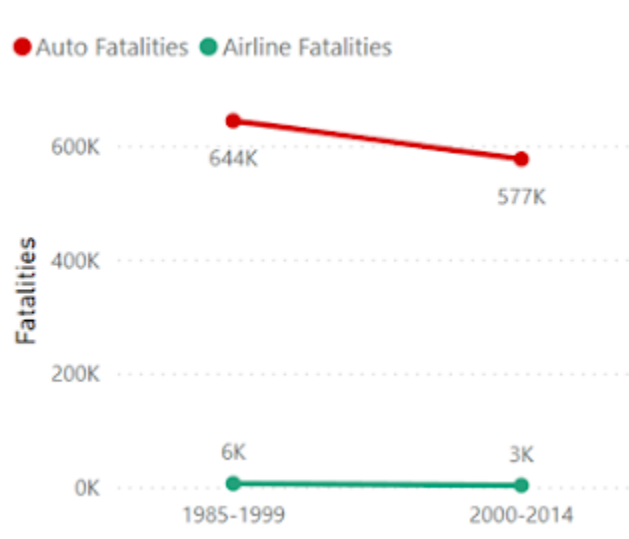
**How much safer am I in an airplane?**

Now there are far more people who utilize automobiles every day, so to make sure we are looking at this as fairly and objectively as we can let's examine the chart below showing how many fatalities there are per kilometers traveled.



*fig 3. You are 306 times more likely to experience an automobile-related fatality than airline*

As you can see, for every 100 million kilometers traveled there are approximately 306,000 automobile related fatalities, and only 1,000 airline related fatalities. But surely that's not taking into account how much safer automobiles have gotten since 1985, right? Well, let's take a look at the difference in fatalities for two time periods, 1985-1999 and 2000-2014.



*fig 4.*

It appears that automobiles have gotten much safer, which is fantastic news! However, airlines have also gotten safer, and fatalities dropped at a much more significant rate than in automobiles. Airlines cut their fatalities by 50% from the first to the second time period, while automobile fatalities only dropped by 11%.

### **Feeling safe through facts**

There is risk in everything we do, from brushing our teeth to walking down steps, but what is important is understanding how risky a choice truly is. When deciding whether or not it is safe to travel by airline, think back to the risk you take every single day by getting into an automobile. Context is important and when looking at how dangerous air-travel is compared to an **actual** dangerous mode of travel, I feel much more safe than how the media tells me I should.

### References

Wikipedia contributors. (2022, June 15). *Motor vehicle fatality rate in U.S. by year*. Wikipedia.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Motor\\_vehicle\\_fatality\\_rate\\_in\\_U.S.\\_by\\_year](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Motor_vehicle_fatality_rate_in_U.S._by_year)

*Airline Safety*. (2018, February 9). [Airline incident and fatality data from 1985–2014].

<https://github.com/fivethirtyeight/data/tree/master/airline-safety>

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