

0470 MOTORCYCLE HELMET USE IN NEUQUEN, ARGENTINA

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10.1136/ip.2010.029215.470

Introduction There have been an increasing number of traffic injuries among motorcyclists in Argentina recently. An important growth in the number of circulating motorcycles and lack of helmet use among riders seem to be closely related to this problem.

Objective To assess the prevalence and possible factors associated with helmet use among motorcycle riders in the city of Neuquen, Patagonia, Argentina.

Material and Methods A non-participative, structured observation method was used. Observations were conducted in twenty different points in the city centre, suburbs and high speed roads. Bidimensional and multidimensional were carried out.

Results 1069 observations were made. 88% of drivers were males. Women were observed driving almost exclusively small motorcycles mostly in suburbs. One of four motorcycles carried passengers, 70% of them being women. Overall helmet use rate among drivers was 72% (64% in suburbs, 78% in city centre, 89% in high speed roads). No difference between genders was observed. Helmet use rate dropped to 42% in suburbs during weekends. The use on helmets declined to 37% among adult passengers and to 30% among children. Six different groups were identified by means of multidimensional analysis.

Conclusions It seems motorcyclists remain inconstant with wearing helmet when they know enforcement is unlikely or believe risk is lower. However, this study shows a twofold increase in helmet use rate in drivers and passengers in comparison to 2005. Discontinuous but rather effective education and enforcement efforts have taken place in this period. Support to sustained action programs is required.