

UNDERSTANDING ROAD TRAFFIC INJURIES AND PREVENTION MEASURES FOR CHILDREN IN RURAL BANGLADESH: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS' VIEWS

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Introduction Road traffic injury (RTI) was the second leading cause of injury mortality and fourth leading of injury morbidity in Bangladesh. For both mortality and morbidity most the vulnerable age group was 5–9 years.

Objectives To gain an in-depth understanding of people's perception of causes and their concepts of prevention of childhood RTIs in rural Bangladesh.

Method Focus Group Discussions were conducted with seven groups: mothers and fathers of children aged 5–12 years; adolescents; students and non-school going children aged 6–12 years, teachers and local leaders. Out of 79 participants 40 were female. The study was conducted in Raiganj rural community in Bangladesh.

Results Most respondents considered that children, aged 5–10 years are at risk of road traffic injuries in rural community, with school going boys being particularly vulnerable. Most of the RTIs were reported to occur on school journey particularly returning home. Key sources of risk identified by participants included: risk taking behaviour, poor supervision, lack of road skills, untrained drivers, unauthorised vehicles, and poorly implemented traffic law. Preventive interventions suggested included supervision, training in road skills, law enforcement by government, increase awareness in the community, and improvement of the road infrastructure.

Conclusions Community people could identify the causes of childhood RTIs and suggest ways of preventing them; but knowledge is not translated into preventative actions. Appropriate community based intervention programmes need to be multi-facet and include practical road safety education for children.