

A STUDY ON ROAD SAFETY FEATURES AND AWARENESS IN SELECTED SCHOOLS IN VELLORE

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Background Road traffic injuries are the commonest and second leading cause of death in the 15–19 and 5–14 years age group, respectively.

Aim Road safety of school children is a poorly addressed issue in India. Safety features near schools and awareness among students were assessed in schools in Vellore.

Methodology A school transport safety checklist was prepared based on robust recommendations. A questionnaire was administered to 146 Year nine students, aged 13–17 years. Six schools were selected by convenience sampling.

Results None of the schools had speed breakers, traffic redistribution arrangements, pedestrian crossings or median islands. 66.67% had no school zone board or traffic lights at intersections near the school. Eighty-seven of 146 questionnaire respondents were boys. About 22–25% of students reported having either collided with, or been involved in a crash with a two-wheeler in the previous

month. A total of 49% of the two-wheeler users rode motorised vehicles to school, despite being under-age for licence. None of the cyclists wore helmets. Only 16% students could not identify even one of four common road signs.

Significance Findings revealed near non-existent safety features near schools and inadequate awareness regarding road safety among students. A phased school safety plan should be planned in consultation with civil authorities. These findings could represent the situation in other parts of India.