

INVESTIGATING THE EXISTENCE OF BLOOD ALCOHOL CONTENT POLICY FOR COMMERCIAL DRIVERS IN NIGERIA

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¹C Ojugbana, ¹A Magbor, ¹D Oba, ²D Ojugbana, ¹B Okonkwo. ¹PATVORA, Nigeria; ²YAD, Nigeria

Background Credible studies have established that alcohol consumption by commercial drivers is a major contributory factor to road crashes and that alcohol abuse by drivers accounts for about 13% of preventable road traffic injuries in Nigeria. This is real threat to about half of Nigeria's 150 million population especially in regions where alcohol consumption is not prohibited by religious affiliation.

Aim To investigate the existence and effectiveness of Alcohol control policy for commercial drivers in Nigeria.

Methods This study was carried out in Nigeria's 36 states, 800 questionnaires were randomly distributed to commercial drivers in all the states. Existing traffic safety laws were reviewed both at state and national levels.

Outcome In all the states investigated, there was no state legislation on Blood Alcohol Content. (BAC) limit. The national road traffic laws reviewed showed that drunk driving was an offence but no established BAC limit. 95% of respondents interviewed stated that they have never been stopped by any enforcement agency for BAC test. All the 40 road safety officers interviewed affirmed the existence of a law on drunk driving but agreed that no enforcement was being carried out.

Significance/Contribution to the Field The study showed that the non existence of BAC limit policy hinders enforcement and prosecution of drivers who drive under the influence of alcohol. BAC limit policy is very necessary because it will help provide evidence for prosecution of offenders, in turn discourage commercial drivers from drink driving, thus saving about 13% of preventable road deaths on Nigerian roads.