

INCREASING SEATBELT USE AND POTENTIAL LIVES SAVED IN ONE REGION OF RUSSIA

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Background The use of seatbelts is an important means of reducing the risk of death or serious injury; yet the seatbelt use rate in Russia is not optimal. The Road Safety 10-Country (RS-10) Project, implemented social marketing campaigns and other interventions since November 2010 in Lipetskaya Oblast, Russia.

Aims/Objectives/Purpose To evaluate the initial impact of these interventions in improving seatbelt use and preventing deaths in the future.

Methods Five rounds of observational studies were conducted on the use of seatbelts in the Lipetskaya region during October 2010 and December 2011. Data were collected in six districts and three different road types, making a total of 18 sites in each round. We also predicted the number of deaths avoided through increased seatbelt use among drivers and front seat passengers.

Results In the baseline, a total of 26 897 vehicles and 41 921 drivers and passengers were observed, among which 56% of drivers, 58% front seat passengers, and only 7% of back seat passengers were observed to use seatbelts. Since the implementation of the interventions, seatbelt use has continuously increased: among drivers, it increased from 56% to 75%; among front seat passengers, it increased from 58% to 78% in December 2011. Our estimated number of lives saved among drivers and front seat passengers through increased seatbelt use ranges between 18 and 23 deaths in 2011.

Significance/Contribution to the Field This study at sub-national level in Russia shows initially promising effects of road safety interventions in improving seatbelt use and preventing future deaths.