

**Background** The non-use of helmets is a specific factor leading to head injuries resulting from motorcycle crashes.

**Purpose** The study's purpose was to explore the commercial motorcyclists' attitude and their practices of helmet wearing.

**Methods** A cross-sectional survey was conducted in urban and peri-urban areas of Dar es Salaam region in May, 2011 at 40 randomly selected commercial motorcycle parking points. A total of 273 commercial motorcyclists participated. Face-to-face interviews were performed using a standard questionnaire while observations were conducted using adapted WHO checklist. Data was analysed using SPSS V.16.0.

**Results** The majority of respondents (81.3%) reported that they wear helmets; few of them (32.4%) wearing a helmet consistently. Predictors of helmet use were having a positive attitude, towards helmet use for passengers ( $p=0.005$ ), protective ability of helmets against head injury ( $p=0.003$ ), wearing of helmets during the night ( $p=0.001$ ) and the necessity of wearing helmets even by experienced riders ( $p=0.000$ ). Commercial motorcyclists who had primary education were more likely to wear helmets than those who had no formal education (AOR 6.146; 95% CI 1.345 to 28.097). No significant difference in helmet wearing between urban and peri-urban areas ( $p=0.109$ ). Observations showed that 52.7% were observed wearing helmets and 91.8% of them had no passenger's helmet.

**Significance** Despite a generally positive attitude towards helmet use, most commercial motorcyclists do not wear helmet consistently. This highlights the need for exploring the factors behind inconsistent helmet use.