

540 POLICY-RELATED MOTORCYCLE TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS IN THAILAND

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Background In Southeast Asia, motor vehicle traffic accidents have claimed more lives than HIV/AIDS. According to the World Health Organisation, the estimated GDP lost due to road traffic crashes in Thailand was around 3 percent in the year 2009–2010. Among those traffic fatalities, motorcycle-involved accidents were accounted more than 50 percent (WHO, 2013). Not wearing a helmet was among major causes of death by motorcycle traffic accidents. In contrast to growing number of motorcycles, Helmet Laws are not strictly enforced and largely ignored by drivers and passengers. The report by the Department of Disease Control, Thailand Ministry of Public Health (2010) showed that less than 50 percent of motorcyclists wore helmets.

Methods Both quantitative and qualitative research was applied in the study. The panel data was collected at the provincial level overtime for analysing the consequences of helmet use laws and other related policies by using the pooled time series model. In addition, there was a Quasi-Experimental Design for examining behaviours of motorcycle riders across the country.

Conclusions The policy-related factors including public safety education and health promotion in wearing helmet had significantly an impact on a reduction in motorcycle traffic fatalities in Thailand.

541 PERSPECTIVES OF OLDER SRI LANKANS ON TRANSPORT-RELATED RISKS INFLUENCING THEIR SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

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Background Perceived risks of road injury can reduce opportunities for social participation and physical activity among older people. These risks are particularly important in low and middle income countries undergoing rapid motorization. This study aimed to explore older peoples' perceptions of opportunities and challenges for social participation, particularly including transport-related risks, in the Moneragala district of Sri Lanka. The Provincial Council of this region has initiated a process to make the district age and disability-friendly.

Methods This qualitative study involved four focus group discussions (8–10 participants in each) with community-dwelling older people aged 60 years and older. The research sought to identify perceived physical and social environmental facilitators and challenges that influenced ease of access to the local and regional destinations that are most important to respondents.

Results Places frequently visited by older people were the hospital, temple, Sunday fair, community hall and bank. The commonest modes of transportation used by respondents included the public bus, walking, and hired three-wheeled vehicles. Participants identified several challenges that increased their exposure to injuries and perceptions of safety including poor road

conditions, lack of a disability-friendly transportation system, poor accessibility and negative attitudes of the wider community.

Conclusions The perceptions and experiences reported by older Sri Lankans emphasise the need to develop and implement road designs, infrastructure and age- and disability- friendly transportation systems; public policies that enhance accessibility; and raise public awareness of the needs and aspirations of older people. These efforts would have the potential to promote resilient communities that enable vulnerable communities at risk of social exclusion, particularly older people, to live the lives they value.

542 PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON ROAD SAFETY AND MOBILITY ISSUES IN CENTRAL EUROPE REGION

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Background The paper describes the methodology and process of public opinion survey which was focused on selected road safety and mobility issues. The survey covered 7 countries in Central Europe and was implemented within international project SOL – Save Our Lives. Paper sums up the outcomes of evaluation of travel preferences and public attitudes towards road safety problems and risk factors.

Methods The main objectives of the survey were to understand respondents' attitudes regarding travel preferences and the link between road safety and sustainable mobility, general road safety attitudes, perception of child injury risks in traffic and biggest risk factors in region. The survey was conducted with a use of quantitative method and by means of an on-line questionnaire.

Results The survey results came from 2721 respondents. In case of two countries data were divided into regions covered by the survey. In all locations respondents claimed the factor that influences road safety most was behaviour and culture of road users, but also role of education and training was emphasised. The conducted survey showed the factor that would encourage respondents to walk more concerns drivers. The analysis showed most of respondents get to work by car, but there were regions with high popularity of bus. Bicycle and walking was also popular. On average respondents had the biggest distance to work/school. The scores provided for the evaluation of local public transport were above the average. Usually accessibility and safety of public transport got the highest. For respondents road safety mainly depends on use of child restraint system, and least on speed cameras and speed limits. In all countries majority of respondents claimed it is necessary to intensify road safety actions.

Conclusions The survey gave a comprehensive picture of mobile preferences and daily behaviour in traffic in the selected regions. The study gave also a picture of risks and road safety perception among respondents.

543 SAFE OR UNSAFE ON THE STREETS

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Background Austrian children start attending school at the age of six. During 4-year primary school pedestrian traffic accidents increase, peaking in the second grade. Traffic safety education methods at school as well as parents themselves seem to

overestimate children's skills in identifying safe and dangerous traffic situations.

Methods We selected 289 pupils from three primary schools in Styria covering urban and rural traffic areas. These children were subdivided into four age groups spanning one year each. The test series consisted of 4 different samples (a traffic mat, a simulation, photos and live action video) with 10 recognition tasks for each (5 safe, 5 unsafe traffic situations) and varying points of view (e.g. from an outside observer, a bird's eye view and from a child's point of view). Over two days, each test was carried out by briefed students and with standardised face-to-face interviews of approx. 20 minutes.

Results Only 75% of the questions were answered correctly, correlating with a clearly defined age trend: the younger the children, the more likely they were to base their assessment of the degree of danger on one single factor: the presence or absence of a vehicle on the road. The percentage of correct answers was higher in older children but all age groups had the most difficulty interpreting the sample from their own points of view. It was easier for children to identify the dangers from an outsider's perspective. In addition, the best performance was shown when using live-action videos.

Conclusions The younger the children, the more difficult it is for them to identify dangerous situations on the road. From the age of 10 onward they are able to interpret most traffic situations correctly, but fail 20% of the time. Hence parents should be informed of the benefit to accompanying their children in the first few weeks of each primary school year and advised not to overestimate their child's traffic-assessing skills.

For traffic safety education purposes it is essential to develop materials consisting of live-action videos and showing the same scenery from different points of view. That way, children will be able to look beyond an obstacle, to think ahead and increase their overall traffic safety.

544 CONTINUOUS APPROACH TO ROAD SAFETY EDUCATION

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Background Road safety culture takes years to form; that is why it is necessary to start road safety education from the very first years of life. More importantly, it is only possible to reach its full potential with the provision of a continuous educational system enforced by the combination of infrastructural, legislative and law enforcement measures.

Objective To provide continuous road safety education with the help of outreach and educational activities.

To develop programs accompanying road users from their early years to adulthood: trainings for parents in perinatal centres; interactive programs for kindergarteners and primary school students; educational classes for middle and high school students; highlighting the importance of road safety for driving school students; reminding adults of their responsibility towards the safety of children.

To bring road safety to the top of the priority list concerning knowledge and skills of vital importance taught to children from an early age.

Results Road Safety Russia campaigns combining interventions effective for various target audiences (children, adults, parents, drivers, passengers) has resulted in a steady decrease in road accident rates in Russia. A significant contribution was made to the fact of drivers and passengers buckling up, drivers sticking to the speed limits, children and their parents being more enthusiastic when it comes to road safety initiatives, constantly improving statistics on child restraint systems use.

Conclusions Continuous approach to education is crucial in the context of providing knowledge on road safety: a child that has always been seated in a child car seat, always used helmets when riding a bike, always crossed the road with their mother via a crosswalk will not risk their life and disregard road safety in their adulthood.

545 STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY ACTION TO REDUCE MOTORCYCLE ACCIDENTS IN DEZFUL, IRAN

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Background Iran is among countries with highest road traffic injuries and mortality. Road traffic mortality is the second cause of death of Iranian population. The share of motorcycles in road injuries and mortalities varies in different cities, but it is highest (60 percent) in a southern city of Iran, Dezful.

Methods An action research project which is partly reported here was designed to strengthen community action to reduce road traffic accidents. Through many advocacy measures, a team including more than 25 public and private stakeholders was formed. By holding several meetings and also conducting complementary individual interviews and comprehensive content analysis, current situation, local determinants of the problem and most highly effective change strategies were determined. A 6 months educational campaign was developed. A valid developed questionnaire was used to measure individual determinates of unsafe motorcycle driving. Pretest and post test was conducted to evaluate the effect of campaign on the rate of motorcycle related accidents and level of change in individual determinants of unsafe driving.

Results Early analysis of formative research showed that absence of safety culture, hot and humid climate of the city and also narrow structure of the streets were among most important determinants of unsafe behaviour. Process evaluation showed that for the first time, such collaboration and intersectoral action has been formed at city level with effective participation of the community. The result of outcome evaluation, the rate of change in road traffic accidents and individual determinants would be reported in this presentation after final data analysis.

Conclusions Effectiveness and sustainability of success of any road safety intervention depends on deep and comprehensive understanding of local determinates of the problem, local solutions and assets and also the quality of community participation in the program.