



TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS ARE PREVENTABLE HEALTH PROBLEMS

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ABSTRACT

Traffic accidents are big source of health problems in nations of the world. According to World Health Organisation almost 1.3 million people die due to traffic accidents every year. Road Traffic Accidents cost most countries almost 3% of their GDP. Clearly traffic accidents are major source of health problems in world. And traffic accidents can be drastically reduced with public transportation replacing private vehicles. This paper recommends replacing private vehicles with public transportation as much as possible to avert traffic accidents.

KEYWORDS :

INTRODUCTION

According to World Health Organisation, the United Nations General Assembly has set up an ambitious target of having the global number of deaths and injuries from road traffic crashes by 2030.[1]

Here are some facts related to Road Traffic Accidents

- Road traffic injuries are the leading cause of death for children and young adults aged 5-29 years.
- Approximately 1.3 million people die each year as a result of road traffic crashes.
- More than half of all road traffic deaths are among vulnerable road users: pedestrians, cyclists, and motorcyclists.
- 93% of the world's fatalities on the roads occur in low- and middle-income countries, even though these countries have approximately 60% of the world's vehicles.
- Road traffic crashes cost most countries 3% of their gross domestic product.

Reasons for Deaths due to Traffic Accidents

There are several reasons for road accidents such as[1]

- a. Speeding : A 1% increase in speed increases risk by 4%
- b. Alcohol
- c. Non Use Helmets and Seat Belt : Use of seat belts can reduce accidents of front seat people by 50% and back seat people by 25%. Helmets can reduce risk of serious injury by 70%
- d. Distracted Driving. Use of Mobiles can increase risk of accidents by 4 times
- e. Unsafe Road Infrastructure
- f. Unsafe Vehicles
- g. Inadequate enforcement of Traffic laws

Traffic Accident Death are correlated to Number of Vehicles

The number of deaths due to road accidents are correlated to number of vehicles on road. Of course in some parts of world there are more deaths for a given number of vehicles. For instance in Africa there are 574 deaths per year for 100,000 vehicles, whereas in America the number of deaths due to road accidents is just 33 per 100,000 vehicles. But there is no doubt that number of deaths due to road accidents is correlated to number of vehicles

Nations of World	Number of Road Deaths per 100,000 inhabitants per year(2016)	Number of Road Deaths per 100,000 vehicles per year(2016)	Number of Road Deaths in Total per year(2016)
Global	18.2		1,350,000
Africa	26.6	574	246,719
Meditaterrean	18	139	122,719
Western Pacific	17	69	328,591
South East Asia	20	101	316080

Americas	15.6	33	153,000
Europe	9.3	19	85000

Public Transportation is the Solution

A Bus can replace almost 50 cars. So if deaths due to road accidents are correlated to number of vehicles, it is obvious that just by switching to public transportation almost 98% of deaths due to road accidents can be solved. Again there is strong correlation between speed and accidents. If speeds are reduced by 20%, almost 80% of accidents can be averted, since 1% increase in speed increases risk by 4%. Furthermore public transportation drivers can follow traffic rules better than private vehicle drivers.

Of course the switch to public transportation need not be complete or immediate. Even if 50% of private vehicles are substituted by public transportation all things considered, almost 80% of road accidents can be averted and prevented. There is no reason to ignore this health advice.

CONCLUSION

Traffic accidents costs global economy upto 3% of GDP and kill almost 1.3 million people. This is serious cause for alarm. Almost 10% of health care expenditure can be attributed to traffic accidents. All this can be entirely avoided by progressive and gradual transition from private transportation to public transportation. Aiming for 90% reduction in deaths due to road accidents and 80% reduction in health care costs due to road accidents is realistic and feasible and there is no excuse for not attempting this.

REFERENCES

1. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/road-traffic-injuries#:~:text=Approximately%201.3%20million%20people%20die,result%20of%20road%20traffic%20crashes.>
2. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_traffic-related_death_rate