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Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

The main strength of the report is that the data were collected on a standard questionnaire from all the countries surveyed, and a homogenous methodology was adopted in the processing of data. Weakness was due to paucity of data on certain themes such as proportion of alcohol-related fatal crashes, road traffic deaths by road users, seatbelt use for nine countries and motorcycle helmet wearing rates. Data were absent for nine of the countries surveyed for the variable on seatbelt wearing rates; therefore the analysis was only possible for 11 countries.

While significant variation exists between countries in the Region, the following are some of the important facts that apply generically to most if not all countries of the Region (Annex 3).

1. Road traffic injury is a major threat to the health and development of the Eastern Mediterranean Region

The report clearly shows the health and to some extent economic burden of road traffic injuries in the Region. The average regional road fatality rate is one of the highest (32.2 per 100 000 inhabitants) in the world, resulting in 176 000 deaths every year. Regional high-income countries have the highest road fatality and injury rates compared to countries with similar socioeconomic status elsewhere. For the economically productive age groups of 15–44 years, road traffic injuries are the leading cause of death and disease burden. Considering reported deaths, the Islamic Republic of Iran has one of the highest road traffic injuries fatality and injury rates in the world, and if estimates are adjusted for the 30-day definition of road fatality then Pakistan has one of leading road fatality



counts in the world. Costing studies for burden of injuries and deaths due to road traffic injury were performed in half of the countries of the Region.

2. No institutional frameworks exist in many countries of the Region

There was no lead agency for road safety in six out of the 20 countries surveyed. Only six countries had a single national road safety strategy, and only three countries had measurable road safety targets for future. About 90% of the countries of the Region do not have national policies for promotion

of cycling and walking and only half of the countries of the Region have policies to invest in public transport.

3. Legislation and enforcement of key road safety interventions need to be strengthened in many countries of the Region

Only 40% of the countries surveyed have set optimum urban speed limits (≤ 50 km/h) on the roads. No law exists in Afghanistan, Iraq and Yemen obliging motorcyclists to wear helmets. Data on helmet wearing rates were available for four countries only. Seatbelt wearing rates above 90% were reported from only one country out of the 11 which reported the use rate. Only two places; Saudi Arabia and the occupied Palestinian territory had child restraint laws. However, enforcement of these laws was rated very poor (≤ 2). Overall, there was poor enforcement of these laws in the Region.

4. Adherence to vehicle and road design safety standards is low in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

In seven countries of the Region, no regular audits for existing road infrastructure were conducted whereas in two other countries no formal audits were required for new road construction projects. Vehicles were manufactured in six countries of the Region, four of which reported that they implemented standards on fuel consumption and seatbelt installation.

5. Some important data are non-existent or incomplete

A number of problems were identified in the regional road traffic data. Only nine countries followed the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (2003) definition of 30 days to define road fatality. The breakdown of road deaths by road user was available for only 10 countries in which a large proportion of involved vehicle type was not specified for Sudan (56%), Egypt (30%) and Islamic Republic of Iran (11%). Road fatality trend was available for 12 countries only.



4.2 Recommendations

Following is the summary of the recommendations based on the findings of the survey. Some of these recommendations apply more to some countries than others.

1. *Establish and strengthen lead agencies and manage performance through target setting.* A government-funded lead road safety agency should be established in each member country. The status of this agency should be interministerial and have a well defined budget in the national budget. This agency should take the lead in data collection, inviting all stakeholder institutions to a central location at least once a year to discuss nationwide road safety problems in the light of international recommendations and national priorities. It should announce measurable road safety targets for the next five years with the help of prominent political/governmental figures to assert the political will for achieving these targets.
2. *Make safe, healthy, environment-friendly transport choices; design transport around walking, cycling and public transport.* Unlike other regions, the Region completely lacks any policies to promote safe walking, cycling and public transport. This should be inculcated in all future transport policies in member countries.
3. *Focus on implementing the five most effective interventions to reduce chances of injury during a crash.*
 - a. *Control speed.* Speed limits on urban and rural roads and motorways should be set by defining each road type in the countries of the Region. Speed enforcement should be done by fixed and mobile speed cameras. Moreover, engineering interventions should be evaluated in the Region so that other member countries can benefit from these interventions being tested with similar settings.
 - b. *Implement seatbelt laws.* Seatbelt laws should apply to all vehicle occupants; and these laws should be better enforced.
 - c. *Promote child restraint in cars.* Child restraint laws need to be developed in most of the countries of the Region. Moreover, enforcement should be improved in those countries where these laws exist.
 - d. *Enforce use of standard motorcycle helmets.* Motorcycle helmet law should include pillion riders, and a standard needs to be defined for these helmets in the countries of the Region. More efforts are required to measure helmet wearing rates in the countries of the Region.
 - e. *Ascertain the role of alcohol in road crashes and control it, if found to be a problem.* Drink driving should be measured in the countries of the Region using standard devices. Moreover, it is possible that other illicit drugs/substances are used before or while driving. Laws should include all these substances, and measurement devices should be made available to the local traffic police.
4. *Allow only safe vehicles on the roads.* Vehicle manufacturing and import standards should be evaluated in the Region to ensure that only vehicles that follow international safety standards, such as those of the European Union, are allowed to be on the market. Safety features should not be treated as “optional” but rather as essential features of a car in the Region.
5. *Ensure safe road design through safety audits at all stages of road construction and maintenance.* Road safety audits should be conducted by national, regional and local road authorities to implement preventive measures on the roads under their jurisdiction.
6. *Improve trauma care.* A pre-hospital care system of ambulances connected through a universal access number is an important but just one component of a comprehensive trauma system. The quality of emergency and trauma care needs to be studied in the Region, and benchmarks for outcomes need to be defined.

7. *Define data needs; harmonize definitions and data collection methodology.* Costing studies should be performed using standard methods in all member countries in order to advocate the need for road safety targets.
8. *Enhance institutional capacity for data gathering, analysis and dissemination.* The Region needs to agree on the data needs, harmonize definitions and data collection methodology. Collaborative relationships between health, police and traffic authorities will need to be established for setting up surveillance

systems. Countries of the Region need to foster institutional development on injury prevention. This can be achieved through governmental stewardship of various institutes working on injury research and prevention.

Annex 1. Definition of road fatality in countries of the Eastern Mediterranean Region

Country	At scene	Within 24 hours	Within 7 days	Within 30 days	Within 1 year
Afghanistan	√	√	√	√	√
Bahrain	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Egypt	√	NA	NA	NA	NA
Iran, Islamic Republic of	NA	NA	NA	√	NA
Iraq	√	√	√		NA
Jordan	NA	NA	NA	√	NA
Kuwait	NA	NA	NA	√	NA
Lebanon	NA	NA	√	NA	NA
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	NA	NA	NA	√	NA
Morocco	NA	NA	NA	√	NA
Occupied Palestinian territory	NA	NA	NA	√	NA
Oman	NA	NA	NA	√	
Pakistan	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Qatar	NA	NA	NA	√	NA
Saudi Arabia	NA	NA	NA	√	NA
Sudan	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Syrian Arab Republic	√	NA	NA	NA	NA
Tunisia	NA	NA	NA	√	NA
United Arab Emirates	NA	NA	NA	√	NA
Yemen	√	√	√	NA	NA

Annex 2. Deaths per 10 000 registered vehicles in countries of the Eastern Mediterranean Region

Country	Reported deaths per 10 000 vehicles	Reported vehicle occupant deaths per 10 000 vehicles	Modelled deaths per 10 000 vehicles	Modelled vehicle occupant deaths per 10 000 vehicles
Afghanistan	2.5		14.5	
Bahrain	2.4	1.5	2.4	1.5
Egypt	28.6	17.0	73.1	43.5
Iran, Islamic Republic of	13.5	11.2	15.0	12.4
Iraq	8.0		49.3	
Jordan	11.8	9.1	24.1	18.6
Kuwait	3.5		3.5	
Lebanon	3.6		8.4	
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	11.7	7.2	13.7	8.4
Morocco	16.8	7.8	38.7	18.0
Occupied Palestinian territory	23.9		110.5	
Oman	12.7		8.8	
Pakistan	10.5		78.5	
Qatar	3.3		3.3	
Saudi Arabia	8.6		9.7	
Sudan	18.6	6.4	111.4	38.4
Syrian Arab Republic	20.3		47.2	
Tunisia	12.0	6.8	28.7	16.2
United Arab Emirates	6.0	4.4	9.3	6.9
Yemen	35.8		84.3	

Annex 3. Overview of status of major recommendations in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

Country	Lead agency	Urban speed \leq 50 km/h	Blood alcohol concentration \leq 0.05 g/dl	Helmet law	Seat-belt law	Child restraint law
Afghanistan	√	√	√	x	x	x
Bahrain	√	√	√	√	√ ^a	x
Egypt	√	√	x	√ ^a	√ ^a	x
Iran, Islamic Republic of	√	√	√	√	√	x
Iraq	√	x	x		√	x
Jordan	√	√*	x	√	√ ^a	x
Kuwait	x	√	√	√	√ ^a	x
Lebanon	x	x	√	√	√ ^a	x
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	x	√	√	√ ^a	√	x
Morocco	√	x	x	√ ^a	√	x
Occupied Palestinian territory	x	√	√	√	√	√
Oman	√	x	x	√	√ ^a	x
Pakistan	√	x	√	√ ^a	√ ^a	x
Qatar	x	x	√	√	√ ^a	x
Saudi Arabia	√	x	√	√ ^a	√	√
Sudan	x	√	√	√	√ ^a	x
Syrian Arab Republic	√	√*	√	√	√ ^a	x
Tunisia	√	√	√	√	√ ^a	x
United Arab Emirates	√	x	x	√	√ ^a	x
Yemen	√	x	√	x	x	x

√ Meets the defined standard

x Does not meet the defined standard

* Speed limits may exceed 50 km/h in some settings

^a Not applied to all occupants/riders