



INJURY PREVENTION

and road safety in urban settings

ISSUES: Injuries result in more than 5 million lives lost across the world every year (up to 9% of global mortality), tens of millions of hospital emergency room visits, and 16% of all disabilities. Increasing urbanization, industrialization and globalization are worsening the situation, especially in the developing world. The burden of disease due to injuries rose from about 12% in 1990 to 15% in 2000, and is expected to increase to about 20% by 2020. In the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region, the injury fatality rate is 93.31 per 100 000 population, ranking third among WHO regions and exceeding the global average.

Road traffic injuries alone kill more than 1.3 million people globally every year, and seriously injure and disable millions more. In the Region, deaths due to road traffic crashes have been rising. In 2002, the mortality rate was 26.4 per 100 000 population, the second highest after the WHO African Region. It has now risen to 32.2 deaths per 100 000 population, on a par with the African Region.

Against this generally high fatality rate, the Region has the highest traffic fatality rates in high-income countries compared to any other Region. It is, in fact the only region where these rates are higher in high-income countries than in low-income countries. The rapid and relatively recent increase in income with concomitant rapid infrastructure development has outpaced growth in safety systems. However, the poor are often more affected and less likely to make a full recovery.

SOLUTIONS:

- Securing strong government political commitment in collaboration with other stakeholders/ local communities;
- Ensuring multisectoral multidisciplinary approaches, Enhancing the quality and quantity of data and research on injury causes, consequences and costs;
- Developing and implementing a road safety and injury prevention policy and plan of action including strengthening legislation and its enforcement;
- Ensuring safe, equitable and improved infrastructure to enable

healthy transportation choices, e.g. walking, cycling and using public transport;

- Raising awareness and promoting investment in road safety and injury prevention;
- Strengthening pre-hospital and trauma care for appropriate and efficient post-injury treatment.

ACTIONS DURING 2010:

- Integration of road safety and injury prevention in community-based initiatives and training of health volunteers and community health workers, within the context of urbanization;
- Advocacy with policy-makers and community leaders for:
 - Follow up of regional commitments to road safety;
 - Promoting the need for multisectoral alliances and partnerships;
 - Recognizing the importance of sound urban planning and infrastructure development for safety promotion and injury prevention;
 - Adopting evidence-based policy options;
 - Tapping community potential to obtain the commitment of individuals to their own safety and that of others and to the possibility of generating new solutions in different settings.
- Participation in public campaigns and discussions through media and among communities to mobilize investments and resources for road safety and injury prevention.

THE WAY FORWARD: The World Health Day 2010 campaign provides an opportunity to emphasize the preventability of injuries through better planning and infrastructure. With the high road traffic injury fatality rates in both high-income and low-income countries, major inputs should go to supporting countries and communities in the actual implementation and improvement of road safety and injury prevention activities, with a focus on the most vulnerable population and according to each country's context.



World Health Day 2010
Urbanization and Health



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