

In 2004, for the first time in the WHO history, World Health Day was focused on the theme of road safety. Although road traffic collisions kill more than 1.2 million people a year around the world, they are largely neglected as a health issue, perhaps because they are still viewed by many as events which are beyond our control. Yet the risks are known: speeding, alcohol, non-use of helmets, seat belts and other restraints, poor road design, poor enforcement of road safety regulations, unsafe vehicle design, and poor emergency health services.

World Health Day 2004 tried to advocate a "systems approach" to road safety, which takes into consideration the key aspects of the system: the road user, the vehicle and the infrastructure.

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