

Role of Leadership in Ensuring Road Safety in Low- and Middle-income Nations: World Health Organization

Saurabh RamBihariLal Shrivastava, Prateek Saurabh Shrivastava¹

Vice-Principal Curriculum, Member of the Medical Education Unit and Institute Research Council, Department of Community Medicine, Shri Sathya Sai Medical College and Research Institute, Sri Balaji Vidyapeeth – Deemed to be University, ¹Department of Community Medicine, Shri Sathya Sai Medical College and Research Institute, Sri Balaji Vidyapeeth – Deemed to be University, Ammapettai, Nellikuppam, Chengalpattu, Kancheepuram, Tamil Nadu, India

Abstract

The global consensus is that road traffic deaths and injuries are an unacceptable and alarming outcome for the sake of mobility. Even though, road safety has been recognized as a public health concern and efforts have been taken to improve the same, the reality is that the number of road traffic deaths is still increasing. Acknowledging the magnitude of the problem and its preventable nature, it is the need of the hour to have a more effective leadership, both from the government and the private sector in ensuring road safety. In order to improve the leadership in road safety, the World Health Organization has come up with a holistic policy on road safety and management of vehicles. In conclusion, the presence of a strong leadership is the crucial element which has to be addressed in the low and middle income nations and it is high time that all the concerned stakeholders work in a coordinated manner to deal with the preventable problem of road traffic injuries.

Keywords: Road safety, leadership, World Health Organization

INTRODUCTION

The global consensus is that road traffic deaths and injuries are an unacceptable and alarming outcome for the sake of mobility.^[1,2] Even though road safety has been recognized as a public health concern and efforts have been taken to improve the same, the reality is that the number of road traffic deaths is still increasing and accounting for more than 1.3 million deaths each year.^[1] Further, road traffic injuries have been ranked as the most common cause of deaths in the 5–29 years' age group individuals.^[1] In continuation, the risk of deaths is three times more in lowincome nations and it clearly justifies the existing gaps and the urgent need to bridge the same.^[1]

Scope of leadership in road safety

Acknowledging the magnitude of the problem and its preventable nature, it is the need of the hour to have a more effective leadership, both from the government and the private sectors in ensuring road safety through the implementation of those strategies which have delivered consistent results in highincome nations.^[2,3] This has been due to the strong leadership and stringent implementation of legal provisions to predominantly target the potential risk factors (viz., speeding,

drinkanddrive, and failing to use seat belts, motorcycle helmets, and child restraints).^[3,4] This has been ably supported by better infrastructure, improved vehicle standards, and better postcrash care.^[2]

The ultimate aim is to attain universal health coverage (viz., trauma care, rehabilitation, and psychological support) for the victims and to ensure that roads are safe for all the users.^[1,5] This will help us in accomplishing the vision to live in a world free of road traffic injuries and deaths.^[1] Despite the availability of effective measures to prevent and control, the real problem in low and middleincome nations has been with regard to its implementation and it is the responsibility of the policy makers and other concerned stakeholders to have better leadership and expedite measures to save the lives of road users.^[2-4]

Address for correspondence: Dr. Saurabh RamBihariLal Shrivastava, Professor, Department of Community Medicine, Shri Sathya Sai Medical College and Research Institute, Sri Balaji Vidyapeeth (SBV) – Deemed to be University, Tirupurur - Guduvancherry Main Road, Ammapettai, Nellikuppam, Chengalpattu, Kancheepuram, Tamil Nadu - 603 108, India. E-mail: drshrishri2008@gmail.com

Submission: 07-05-2019 **Accepted:** 21-09-2019 **Published Online:** 23-12-2019

This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 License, which allows others to remix, tweak, and build upon the work non-commercially, as long as the author is credited and the new creations are licensed under the identical terms.

For reprints contact: reprints@medknow.com

How to cite this article: Shrivastava SR, Shrivastava PS. Role of leadership in ensuring road safety in low- and middle-income nations: World Health Organization. *Med J Babylon* 2019;16:362-3.

Access this article online

Quick Response Code:



Website:
www.medjbabylon.org

DOI:
10.4103/MJBL.MJBL_30_19

Strengthening leadership

To improve the leadership in road safety, the World Health Organization has come up with a holistic policy on road safety and management of vehicles.^[3] The policy advocates for the safe operation of vehicles to minimize the potential risk of road traffic accidents and that any such untoward incident is professionally dealt with a team of trained professionals on an urgent basis.^[2,3] As of now, 109 nations have established a telephone number to initiate the process of emergency care across the nation.^[1]

In addition, emphasis has been given toward the training of drivers, first aid training, and development of a standard reporting system.^[1] Further, measures should be taken to create awareness about the health promotion measures, including no overspeeding or no mobile/drink and drive or use of appropriate safety measures at different levels to target all road users.^[2,3] The observation of road safety week is a thoughtful initiative to not only create awareness but also strengthen the existing measures.^[3]

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the presence of a strong leadership is the

crucial element which has to be addressed in the low and middleincome nations and it is high time that all the concerned stakeholders work in a coordinated manner to deal with the preventable problem of road traffic injuries.

Financial support and sponsorship

Nil.

Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

REFERENCES

1. World Health Organization. Global Status Report on Road Safety 2018. Geneva: WHO Press; 2018. p. 1-18.
2. Shrivastava SR, Shrivastava PS, Ramasamy J. Global plan for the decade of action for road safety: Expectations from developing nations. Saudi J Med Med Sci 2014;2:57-8.
3. World Health Organization. Advocates around the World #Speakup for #Roadsafety. World Health Organization; 2019. Available from: <https://www.who.int/roadsafety/week/2019/5th-road-safety-week/en/>. [Last accessed on 2019 May 08].
4. Donkor I, Gyedu A, Edusei AK, Ebel BE, Donkor P. Mobile phone use among commercial drivers in Ghana: An important threat to road safety. Ghana Med J 2018;52:122-6.
5. Shrivastava SR, Shrivastava PS. The necessity of a holistic response to minimize the morbidity and mortality attributed to road traffic injuries. Al Ameen J Med Sci 2018;11:239-40.