

Road Traffic Injuries Research in Uganda



Protecting Vulnerable Road Users through Visibility Improvement: A Pilot Study



GOAL

To evaluate the feasibility of visibility enhancement materials (VEMs) as an intervention for road traffic injuries (RTIs) among motor- and pedal-cyclists in Uganda

OBJECTIVES

- > To identify the types of VEMs currently available that can be used in Uganda
- > To determine the acceptability of VEMs among motor- and pedal-cyclists in Uganda
- > To identify strategies for the distribution of VEMs to motor- and pedal-cyclists
- > To identify potential study populations and sample sizes for evaluating VEM-based interventions
- > To identify outcome measures for evaluating the effectiveness of VEM-based interventions

METHODS

A cross-sectional survey of motor- and pedal-cyclists in the peri-urban community of Kampala, Uganda was conducted. Qualitative methods such as focus groups and in-depth interviews were used to solicit participant preferences for VEMs as well as strategies for the distribution of VEMs in Uganda.

RESULTS

A range of VEMs are currently available including garments with reflective materials (T-shirts, aprons, arm and head bands, specialty footwear), and adhesive strips/tape that can be attached to bikes and helmets.

The two types of VEMs most preferred by cyclists were the apron worn by the riders and reflective tapes installed onto the bike. Aprons were preferred because riders could wear them over any clothing while tapes were preferred because they stayed in place at all times.

Reasons for non-use of VEMs included lack of awareness of VEMs and their effectiveness, discomfort of wearing VEMs in certain weather conditions, and the lack of legislation mandating VEM use.

Proposed strategies for the distribution of VEMs on a large scale included the use of administrative chairpersons of cyclist "stages" (parking communities), city council authorities and through bike and spare parts retailers.

Measuring crash rates through the use of police data and self-reports is a good means of evaluating the effectiveness of VEMs. Using hospital data is challenging due to the fact that injuries are not always recorded by cause.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- > VEMs should be introduced on a wider scale as a preventative measure against RTIs in Uganda.
- > VEMs such as reflective tapes should be installed on the bikes at the point of purchase.
- > Local manufacturers and distributors need to be involved in the distribution of VEMs.
- > Efforts to make the VEMs, such as aprons, less costly through the removal of sales taxes on these items.
- > VEMs that are worn by cyclists need to look stylish and be promoted by celebrity cyclists in order to appeal to young riders.
- > A randomized controlled trial should be carried out in cooperation with local authorities in the urban and peri-urban Uganda to test the effectiveness of VEMs in preventing RTIs.

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