

RISK FACTORS FOR ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS AMONG DRIVERS ADMITTED TO TEACHING HOSPITALS KANDY AND KURUNEGALA IN 2017

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Road Traffic Accidents (RTA) highly contribute to morbidity and mortality worldwide. RTAs are one of the main causes of sudden deaths in Sri Lanka. Therefore, the objective of this descriptive cross-sectional study was to identify the risk factors for RTA among drivers admitted to Teaching Hospitals in Kurunegala and Kandy in 2017. The study considered 360 drivers (Kurunegala = 242, Kandy = 118) admitted to the accident wards due to RTAs. Information related to the demographic, occupational, vehicle, road and environment, nature of injury were collected from all individuals using an interviewer administered questionnaire. Male drivers (97%) aged between 26-35 years (28.9%) were mainly affected and motorcycles contributed to over 79% of total accidents. 47.8% of drivers had less than 10 years driving experience and 32.5% affected RTA were while travelling at a speed between 31 and 45 km/h, 27.8% in 46-60 km/h. The majority occurred between 6pm-12pm (31.11%) in the day and 23% of RTAs occurred on Fridays of the week. Limited contribution occurred while driving with alcohol (6.9%) and with technical faults (8.0%). Over 54% of the drivers had slept less than 8 hours in the previous day of the accident. Condition of the

road was not reported as a reason for accidents and 61% had RTAs on carpet roads. Lower limbs were commonly injured (40%) and nearly 60% of the drivers who had faced motorcycle accidents had injuries in legs, hands or head. Significant associations showed between speed of the vehicle and driving experience of drivers ($p < 0.05$), type of the vehicle and the site of the injury ($p < 0.05$), type of the vehicle and age of the driver ($p < 0.05$), speed of the vehicle and type of the road ($p < 0.05$) at the time of the accident. The study concluded that the high risk of RTAs was among young male drivers in the 26–35 years age range and motorcycles was the most contributed vehicle in the study population. Rush hours with low day light (evening to midnight) were more vulnerable for RTAs mainly on Friday. However, a number of drivers with serious injuries or deaths were excluded from the data collection. Further studies on RTA are suggested and a proper education program should be implemented by addressing identified risk factors to minimize RTA related injuries.

Keywords: Road Traffic Accidents, Risk Factors, Drivers, Injuries