



To Analyze Road Traffic Injuries in the Middle East

By Ellen Schenck, Program Intern

The mortality due to road traffic injuries in the Middle East is immense, accounting for 130,000 deaths each year--the equivalent of one airbus crashing every day. The Middle East presents a myriad of socio-cultural perspectives, religious beliefs, and proportions of local inhabitants to expatriates. Even within high-income countries

such as the UAE, which has witnessed a decrease in traffic death rate due to modern road systems and traffic enforcement, road traffic injuries are still at rates above that of other developed nations. Researchers in Turkey have linked driving skills to several variables, including the number of crashes, quantity of tickets, and aggressive driving style, overall, shedding more light on the causes of road traffic injuries than existed in the past.

Amid the complexity of this burden, some promising efforts for intervention and research have been instilled. For example, in recent years, Saudi Arabia has enacted compulsory seatbelt laws, and studies have shown improvements in seatbelt usage by drivers and front seat passengers. Moreover, despite the immensity and uniqueness of the road traffic injuries in the Middle East, the gaps identified present exciting opportunities for partnership. Efforts from the research field to evaluate the impact of interventions on the injury rates as well as from the policy sectors to set standards for such evaluation will lead to investment of proven effective measures. Together, by stopping to analyze the injury burden and by driving forward with tight partnerships, the daily airplane of doomed passengers will cease to fly over the Middle East. ■

Recent RTI Publications

[Huang SX, Li SY, Zhang XG, Kong B, Zhu YL, Liu KL.](#)

Epidemiological research and analysis on the impaired person in road traffic accident in Chengdu area. *Fa Yi Xue Za Zhi.* 2007 Aug; 23(4):269-73

[Umaru H, Ahidjo A, Dogo H.](#)

Pedestrian injuries resulting from road traffic injuries: the Azare experience. *Niger J Med.* 2007 Aug 16; [Epub]

[Poudel-Tandukar K, Nakahara S, Ichikawa M, Poudel KC, Jimba M.](#)

Risk perception, road behavior, and pedestrian injury among adolescent students in Kathmandu, Nepal. *Injury Prev.* 2007 Aug; 13(4):258-63

[Eddleston M, Udayakumara N, Adhikari S, de Silva D, Sheriff MH, Waidyaratne DL.](#)

The importance of poisoning vs. road traffic injuries as a cause of death in rural Sri Lanka. *PLoS ONE.* 2007 Jul 10; 7:152



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road research
The Newsletter of the Road Traffic Injuries Research Network



A message from the RTIRN Board Chair

Dear colleagues and friends

It is my great pleasure to congratulate and welcome Dr Junaid Razzak as the Secretary of the Road Traffic Injuries Research Network (RTIRN) and Aga Khan University in Karachi, Pakistan, as our new hosts for the Secretariat. In my January newsletter editorial, I advised that the search had begun for a new host, given that the term of our first Secretariat in Kandy, Sri Lanka was drawing to a close. We were thrilled to receive a number of very competitive expressions of interest from a range of partners from around the globe. However, after an extensive short listing process, involving those members of the Board without conflicts of interest, the Board unanimously selected Dr Razzak and Aga Khan University to be our hosts. A profile of Dr Razzak and Aga Khan University are included in the newsletter and I trust you will join with me and the Board in welcoming Junaid in this new role.

While on the one hand we welcome our new Secretariat, we concurrently extend our thanks to Dr Samath Dharmaratne and the University of Peradeniya for their pioneering efforts in establishing the Secretariat in Sri Lanka. We would also like to thank Ms Rizmia Naizer for her role in supporting Samath and the Secretariat. Certainly the last two years have been an important learning experience for the Board and the Secretariat, that I have no doubt will be most helpful in assisting us in establishing the Secretariat in its new home in Pakistan.

The transition of the Secretariat from Sri Lanka to Pakistan is already

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underway, with support from our colleagues at Johns Hopkins University – notably our Vice Chair, Dr Adnan Hyder and Dr Nhan Tran. In conjunction with the forthcoming international conference on “Injuries in the Developing World: from Prevention to Care” hosted by Aga Khan University from 23-25 October 2007 we plan to officially launch the Secretariat. We anticipate that the Secretariat in Pakistan will be fully functioning from that date.

In the interim we would like to extend an invitation to our partners to both attend the conference (further details of which are provided in this newsletter) as well as the official launch of the Secretariat which we anticipate will be held on the final day of the conference. We would also like to invite partners to attend a pre-symposium injury surveillance workshop being held on 23 October, that RTIRN is co-sponsoring in collaboration with Johns Hopkins University. Please contact Dr Nhan Tran for further details of the latter (nhtran@jhsph.edu).

Lastly, I would like to remind partners of the forthcoming annual meeting of the Global Forum for Health Research (Forum 11), to be held in Beijing, China from 29 October – 2 November. While we will not be hosting an RTIRN meeting at the Forum this year, there will be a session that includes presentations on road traffic injuries and we will be hosting a booth in the marketplace. If you are planning on attending, we would welcome your assistance at the booth.

Best wishes

Robyn Norton, Board Chair ■

RTIRN Welcomes Dr. Junaid Razzak and Aga Khan University

Dr. Junaid A. Razzak is the Chief of Emergency Medicine, and Chair of Injury Research group at the Aga Khan University in Karachi, Pakistan. Dr. Razzak obtained his clinical training in Emergency Medicine at the Yale University School of Medicine in the United States of America and has a PhD in Public Health from the Karolinska Institute, Sweden. Prior to joining the Aga Khan University, Dr. Razzak held full time faculty appointments at Yale and Emory Universities in the United States.



Dr. Razzak is a fellow of the American College of Emergency Physicians. He has been a member of the Research Committee

UPCOMING EVENTS

“Injury in the Developing World - from Prevention to Care”

October 23-25, 2007
Aga Khan University, Pakistan

“Forum 11: Equitable Access: Research Challenges for Health in Developing Countries”

October 29-November 2, 2007
Beijing, China

“World Congress on Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion 2008”

March 15-18, 2008
Merida, Mexico

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of the American College of Emergency Physicians, the Ethics Committee of the Society of Academic Emergency Medicine and Vice President and member of the Board of Directors, Pakistan Public Health Foundation. Dr. Razzak is a member of Governor’s Advisory Group on Road Safety and is heading the Trauma Task Force in the province of Sindh in Pakistan. He has been a member of the International Steering Committee on Pre-hospital and Hospital Trauma Care Improvement. He was one of the reviewers for the WHO’s reports on “Prehospital Trauma Care Systems” and “Youth and Road Safety”. He is one of the authors for the chapter on road traffic injuries in the upcoming world report on childhood injuries.

Dr. Razzak has authored a number of papers on injuries and emergency care. He is the Co Investigator for the Fogarty funded Research Training Program in Trauma and Injuries between the Johns Hopkins University and the Aga Khan University. He is also the local PI for the multi-country study on non-standard helmet use funded through the RTIRN. Dr. Razzak’s research group is currently involved in projects surrounding the road traffic injury surveillance activities, helmet use, pre-hospital care and self harm.

Aga Khan University is part of the Aga Khan Development Network, and has nine teaching sites spread over six countries - Afghanistan, Kenya, Pakistan, Tanzania, Uganda, and the United Kingdom. The Aga Khan University’s mission is “the development of human capacities through the discovery and dissemination of knowledge, and application through service”. As part of this mission the University is involved in shaping public and private policies through its strength in research and excellence in education.

AKU’s main campus in Karachi hosts an international team of leaders in research and academic areas steering Pakistan’s best medical and nursing schools, clinical and community research infrastructure, and an array of specialized training programs in

Partner Profile: Abdulbari Bener

The RTIRN introduces an esteemed partner, Dr. Abdulbari Bener. With current work focusing on road safety and childhood trauma prevention, Dr. Bener is also an advisor to the World Health Organization, an adjunct professor with the University of Manchester and the Department of Public Health at the Weill Cornell Medical College, the Head of the Department of Epidemiology and Medical Statistics at the Hamad Medical Corporation, and a professor within the Departments of Biomedical Sciences and Statistics at the University of Qatar. His recent research interests in Qatar have involved assessing the occurrence of road traffic injuries, developing seat belt legislation, studying mobile phone usage by drivers, and determining the correlation between driver behavior and traffic crashes. Dr. Bener joins the network with a motivation to collaborate and exchange information with other partners within RTIRN.



over twenty seven medical specialties, public health areas like epidemiology and biostatistics, health systems, clinical research as well as PhD in health sciences are components of the training program at the AKU.

In the area of health research, a third of all peer-reviewed publications from Pakistan originate from Aga Khan University. Academic and research successes are not only because of highly qualified faculty and students but also to the presence of extraordinary infrastructure and enabling environment often not seen in institutions in developing countries.