

Abstract

The study was carried out to assess road safeness and prevalence of road traffic accidents in Uganda; it was a cross-sectional survey with both qualitative and quantitative data collected.

Findings indicated that road traffic accidents affect pedestrians more than any other road user, the major human cause of accidents was careless driving and most accidents occurred in the evening between 4pm and 8pm, morning between 7am and 8am and lunch time between 12 noon and 2pm. All roads were congested with many pot holes, had no pedestrian walkways and few safety features. Most vehicles lacked certain parts critical for safety. Corruption was the major factor affecting implementation of road policies.

The study recommends educational campaigns through schools, review of vehicle inspection system and safety controls, adequate traffic signage, safety features including pedestrian walkways, adequate training to traffic police officers and provision of adequate resources.

Background: Everyday approximately 3,000 people die and 30,000 people are seriously injured on the world's roads (WHO 2004). Globally, trauma resulting from road traffic crashes is a major cause of death and disability with the majority occurring in developing countries (Nantulya et al 2002). According to Injury Control Centre Uganda Executive Director (2009) 44% of all injuries presented in hospitals are due to road traffic crashes.

In Uganda, road traffic crashes have increased by 90% since 2000 and in 2007 almost 10,000 people were injured and over 2,000 died from road traffic accidents; this puts a significant strain on the already stretched health facilities and poor families who may experience the loss of income from a bread winner in addition to the burden of caring for those injured.

Objectives:

Major objective; To assess the road safeness and accident prevalence in central region.

Specific objectives:

- To establish the prevalence of road traffic accidents in Kampala area.

- To determine the human factors influencing road safety in Kampala area.

- To determine the condition and terrain of the roads in Kampala area.

- To determine the vehicle conditions affecting road safety in Kampala area.

- To determine the factors influencing implementation of road policies Kampala area.

Methodology: the study was a cross-sectional survey with both qualitative and quantitative data collected.

192 respondents were interviewed, of which 48 were drivers, 48 were passengers, 48 were riders and 48 were pedestrians.

Observation was done on all the 20 roads in the study for a period of one hour.

40 vehicles were examined, every fifth vehicle parked on the different roads was chosen.

Results

Source: Primary data.

The figure shows that 36.4% of drivers wore seat-belts while 63.6% did not wear seat-belts. 25% of riders wore helmets while 75% did not wear helmets. 70% of drivers and riders were distracted with 65% talking to passenger, 31.6% talking on phone, 25% reading newspapers and 5% were texting on phone.

Figure 2 shows that pedestrians are affected most in road traffic accidents with 49.47% killed, 41.57% seriously injured and 36.82% slightly injured.

The figure shows that most accidents occur in the evening, between 4pm and 8pm; in the morning hours between 7am and 9am; and lunch time between 12 noon and 2pm.

Implementation of road policies is mainly influenced by corruption, limited resources, driver ignorance and personnel shortage as shown in the figure below.

Discussion

Findings indicated that pedestrians were more affected in road traffic accident which is in contrast to the results from analysis of factors affecting road safety: the Greek experience (Golias, J. C. *et al*, 1997) where more drivers were affected followed by passengers and pedestrians.

Human factors accounted for 95.26% of road traffic accidents which is consistent with results of the comprehensive study of road safety (Treat *et al*, 1977) where human factors accounted for 57%.

The hourly variation of 4pm to 8pm is consistent with the Greek experience (Golias, J. C. *et al*, 1997) where a significant number of fatal accidents occurred during evening hours (6pm to midnight). This can be attributed to rush hour movement as people travel back home with most of them tired from the day's work.

The roads had no pedestrian walkways, with many pot holes and poor drainage which leads to wear and tear of roads. The road condition is also affected by overloading which deteriorates the road net work and reduces road life span (Watkins *et al*, 2009).

Conclusion:

Pedestrians were the most affected road users in Uganda during 2010. Human factors cause more road traffic accidents than vehicle, road factors. Ugandan roads were in a poor state and yet too congested. Vehicles lacked certain parts critical for safety. Corruption was the major factor influencing implementation of road policies.

Recommendations:

There should be educational campaigns on traffic safety, review of the vehicle inspection system, improved road condition through adequate traffic signage and safety features including construction of pedestrian walkways and provision of adequate resources for traffic police department.