

Introduction; Annually over 35 million road traffic injuries are sustained globally, several of which are fatal. Safety belts have been established as the primary form of restraint and thus protection in the event of an accident. Since the introduction of the first safety belt law in Australia and then the rest of the world, developed nations have registered a remarkable decline in severe injuries and road fatalities. Middle to low income economies still lag behind in road safety and are reported to have the lowest rates of safety belt use. Uganda has the highest road traffic fatality rate of any East African state. Making its roads the most dangerous roads in the region. The economic costs of managing the aftermath of an accident make this a matter of public health concern. WHO has advocated for safety belts as a means to reduce on road fatalities.

Objective; to determine the factors influencing the use of safety belts among taxi drivers in Katwe, Kampala City. Specifically to determine the proportion of safety belt use, the social and demographic characteristics of taxi drivers in relation to safety belt use, attitude towards safety belt use and any other factors influencing safety belt use among taxi drivers.

Methods; A cross sectional study of 161 taxi drivers was conducted in Katwe area during the period of October to November 2015. Quantitative methods of data collection using a researcher administered questionnaire were utilized. Chi square test was conducted at bivariate analysis to establish the association between the independent variable and the dependent variable.

Regression model was used at multivariate analysis to estimate the odds ratio and their 95% confidence interval for safety belt use comparing them with the independent variables.

Results: The proportion of safety belt use among taxi drivers in Katwe was 13%. Taxi drivers above 58 years were more 1.761 times more likely to use safety belts than the young drivers (18- 27) years. (OR- 1.671; 95% CI; 1.7-2.0), participants that had attained an advanced secondary level of education were 1.864 times more likely to use seat belts than those who had received no education at all (OR- 1.864; 95 % CI; 0.5-0.6). Respondents that disagreed that safety belts are uncomfortable were 1.1 times more likely to use them than those who agreed (OR- 1.104; 95% CI; 1.1-1.3), participants who disagreed that seat belts are time consuming to wear were 1.3 times more likely to wear them than those who agreed (OR-1.321; 95% CI; 1.1-1.4). Other factors that influenced use of safety belts were; seat belts worn if traffic officer is seen, history of an accident, went to a driving school, Fined for not wearing seat belt [(OR; 0.451, 95% CI; 0.1- 0.7: Pv-0.004), (OR; 13.610, 95% CI; 3.4-20.8: Pv-0.041), (OR; 13.610, 95% CI;3.4-20.8: Pv- 0.041) and (OR;1.502,95%CI; 1.1-22.1: p-v-0.004)] respectively.

Conclusion; safety belt use rates are still very low in Uganda and there is need to increase their use if we aim at reducing road fatality rates for the country.

Recommendations

1. Enforce the safety belt law that is in place and penalize offenders.
2. Driving schools should be accredited and among its modules, road safety and use of safety belts should be emphasized.
3. Mass media campaigns should be done so that drivers are repeatedly reminded of the benefits of wearing a safety belt.
4. Programs targeting interest groups should be set up.
5. Further research recommended in order to gather more information that can be useful in the implementation of safety belt use among all drivers in Uganda.