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540 POLICY-RELATED MOTORCYCLE TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS IN THAILAND

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Background In Southeast Asia, motor vehicle traffic accidents have claimed more lives than HIV/AIDS. According to the World Health Organisation, the estimated GDP lost due to road traffic crashes in Thailand was around 3 percent in the year 2009–2010. Among those traffic fatalities, motorcycle-involved accidents were accounted more than 50 percent (WHO, 2013). Not wearing a helmet was among major causes of death by motorcycle traffic accidents. In contrast to growing number of motorcycles, Helmet Laws are not strictly enforced and largely ignored by drivers and passengers. The report by the Department of Disease Control, Thailand Ministry of Public Health (2010) showed that less than 50 percent of motorcyclists wore helmets.

Methods Both quantitative and qualitative research was applied in the study. The panel data was collected at the provincial level overtime for analysing the consequences of helmet use laws and other related policies by using the pooled time series model. In addition, there was a Quasi-Experimental Design for examining behaviours of motorcycle riders across the country.

Conclusions The policy-related factors including public safety education and health promotion in wearing helmet had significantly an impact on a reduction in motorcycle traffic fatalities in Thailand.

541 PERSPECTIVES OF OLDER SRI LANKANS ON TRANSPORT-RELATED RISKS INFLUENCING THEIR SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

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Background Perceived risks of road injury can reduce opportunities for social participation and physical activity among older people. These risks are particularly important in low and middle income countries undergoing rapid motorization. This study aimed to explore older peoples' perceptions of opportunities and challenges for social participation, particularly including transport-related risks, in the Moneragala district of Sri Lanka. The Provincial Council of this region has initiated a process to make the district age and disability-friendly.

Methods This qualitative study involved four focus group discussions (8–10 participants in each) with community-dwelling older people aged 60 years and older. The research sought to identify perceived physical and social environmental facilitators and challenges that influenced ease of access to the local and regional destinations that are most important to respondents.

Results Places frequently visited by older people were the hospital, temple, Sunday fair, community hall and bank. The commonest modes of transportation used by respondents included the public bus, walking, and hired three-wheeled vehicles. Participants identified several challenges that increased their exposure to injuries and perceptions of safety including poor road

conditions, lack of a disability-friendly transportation system, poor accessibility and negative attitudes of the wider community. **Conclusions** The perceptions and experiences reported by older Sri Lankans emphasise the need to develop and implement road designs, infrastructure and age- and disability- friendly transportation systems; public policies that enhance accessibility; and raise public awareness of the needs and aspirations of older people. These efforts would have the potential to promote resilient communities that enable vulnerable communities at risk of social exclusion, particularly older people, to live the lives they value.

542 PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON ROAD SAFETY AND MOBILITY ISSUES IN CENTRAL EUROPE REGION

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Background The paper describes the methodology and process of public opinion survey which was focused on selected road safety and mobility issues. The survey covered 7 countries in Central Europe and was implemented within international project SOL – Save Our Lives. Paper sums up the outcomes of evaluation of travel preferences and public attitudes towards road safety problems and risk factors.

Methods The main objectives of the survey were to understand respondents' attitudes regarding travel preferences and the link between road safety and sustainable mobility, general road safety attitudes, perception of child injury risks in traffic and biggest risk factors in region. The survey was conducted with a use of quantitative method and by means of an on-line questionnaire.

Results The survey results came from 2721 respondents. In case of two countries data were divided into regions covered by the survey. In all locations respondents claimed the factor that influences road safety most was behaviour and culture of road users, but also role of education and training was emphasised. The conducted survey showed the factor that would encourage respondents to walk more concerns drivers. The analysis showed most of respondents get to work by car, but there were regions with high popularity of bus. Bicycle and walking was also popular. On average, respondents had the biggest distance to work/school. The scores provided for the evaluation of local public transport were above the average. Usually accessibility and safety of public transport got the highest. For respondents road safety mainly depends on use of child restraint system, and least on speed cameras and speed limits. In all countries majority of respondents claimed it is necessary to intensify road safety actions.

Conclusions The survey gave a comprehensive picture of mobile preferences and daily behaviour in traffic in the selected regions. The study gave also a picture of risks and road safety perception among respondents.

543 SAFE OR UNSAFE ON THE STREETS

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Background Austrian children start attending school at the age of six. During 4-year primary school pedestrian traffic accidents increase, peaking in the second grade. Traffic safety education methods at school as well as parents themselves seem to