

The social environment of soaring bodaboda motorcycle road accidents in Dar es Salaam: a case of Kinondoni municipality

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Motorcycle accidents constitute a major emerging public health problem in developing countries. Tanzania is one of the countries experiencing an upsurge in such accidents. The victims are passengers and other road users and, inevitably, the motorcyclists themselves. Increasingly, motorcycle road accidents have become a societal problem with far-reaching social implications. The main objective of this study, therefore, was to explore the social environment under which motorcycle road accidents occur. The study used Symbolic Interactionism and Labelling theories in its conceptualisation. Data were collected from parking bays on Morogoro, Nelson Mandela and Sam Nujoma roads in Kinondoni Municipality, Dar es Salaam region. The study used an exploratory research design and qualitative data collection methods, namely, participant observation, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The data so collected were subjected to content analysis, whereby data was analysed by formulating main themes and sub-themes. These themes were interpreted and discussed in accordance with the study's questions and objectives. The study has established a pattern and trend in motor traffic accidents in Kinondoni Municipality from 2001 to 2004. The findings show that the accident occurrence was increasing every year. In the meantime, passengers and motorcycle riders were always at high risk of being injured or killed on the road. In this regard, young males were found to be highly prone to motor traffic accidents. The findings also show that, there are several human factors that cause motorcycle road accidents including over-speeding, alcohol use, inexperience, failure to observe traffic signs and regulations, and lack of protective gear notably non-use of safety helmets even when available. Alcohol and other related substances were found to contribute a great deal to serious motorcycle accidents, which in turn lead to physical impairment of the victims. Mechanical factors such as malfunctions of motorcycle parts such as defective tyres are also contributed to motorcycle accidents. Environmental factors such as the absence of road traffic signs for motorcycle riders also contribute to motorcycle accidents. The study findings also reveal that, the perceptions of motorcyclists toward safety vary greatly: some motorcyclists

emphasise on safety in riding whereas others give it little thought and attention. In addition, motorcyclists associate the behaviour of drinking and riding with a reason of protecting their bodies with the environmental factors such as heat, wind, cold and dust while riding. Therefore, the study concludes that, the perception of risk behaviours is the cause of the rising motorcyclist accidents. Motorcyclists' death rate is high among the young adult male of 19-39 in both communities in Kinondoni. A positive outcome was detected at the beginning of safe community programme on knowledge, attitude and behaviour of motorcycle riders and preventive measures. Generally, the study suggests that, there is an increasing need to conduct frequent formal training for motorcyclists and other interventions from all stakeholders on matters concerning motorcyclist safety.