

*Letter to Editor***Experiences of Phase 1 students of MBBS course regarding motorcar accidents**\**Hasamnis AA<sup>1</sup>, Patil SP<sup>2</sup>*<sup>1</sup>*Senior Lecturer, School of Medicine, Taylor's University, Malaysia,*<sup>2</sup>*Senior Lecturer, School of Medicine, Taylor's University, Malaysia***ARTICLE INFO:****Article history:**

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Road traffic accidents and injuries is a major social problem among university students all over the world. It is a third cause of admission and fifth cause of death in Malaysian government hospitals as of today<sup>[1]</sup>. Majority of road traffic accidents related deaths and disabilities are seen in teenagers attending various universities in the country. Road traffic incidents indicate a loss in potential healthy years of life and socially affect not only student's family but also have an impact on national productivity. This study was done to know the experiences of phase 1 students of Newcastle University regarding motorcar accidents.

116 students of Phase 1 of MBBS course from Newcastle University were selected for the study and a questionnaire was given to them. The study analyzed data on road traffic accidents involving motorcars occupant (drivers and passengers) occurring within the last 24 months. Questionnaires were administered in classroom to the willing participants. A briefing was given by one of the authors prior to the survey. Students' anonymity was protected during the survey. Out of the 116 students who participated in the study, 112 students (96.55%) actually completed the questionnaire. Four students did not participate in the study.

Out of the 112 students who participated, 70 students (62.5%) had their own car and they travelled to university everyday on their own. Out of these 70 students majority (69 students, 98.57%) had competent driving license at the time of study. 1 student had probation license and usually travelled in his own car but was carpooling with a student who had competent driving license. 16 students (22.85%) accepted that they meet with a car accident in the last 24 months at least once. 2 students (2.85%) had injuries related to the accident and were hospitalized for more than 7 days

for musculoskeletal injuries. They had to take sick leave for minimum 15 days for the same. The rest of the 14 students (20%) did not suffer from any injuries during the accident. All the students had their car damaged during the accident. 13 students (18.57%) accepted that there was no human error from their side for the accident to happen. The remaining 3 students (4.28%) accepted that it was their mistake that lead to the accident.

Majority of students with their own car (12, 17.14%) accepted that accidents did happen at cross roads and that over speeding and not interpreting signal correctly were the reasons for the accidents. 4 (5.71%) students had the accident when they were travelling along the straight road or trying to park the vehicle and that confusion while driving/parking caused the problem. All most all students accepted that driving during exams is stressful and it is best if one could avoid driving during the period.

11 students (15.71%) meet the accident during evening time and 3 students (4.28%) in morning and the rest (2, 2.85%) had accident in the night time while travelling home after library hours. Almost all students accepted that travelling to and fro from the university was the most stressful period of driving. 5 (7.1%) students accepted that they had not strapped seat belt at the time of accident.

33 students travelled to the University by public transport or by carpooling. In this group of students only 2 (6.06%) students had minor motor vehicle accident and that they attributed it to driver's fault while driving. No one was injured during the accident. 1 (1.42%) Student accepted that accident caused injury to second and third party and medical attention was required for

the case and there was no permanent morbidity and mortality associated with the case.

All students agreed that road traffic accident is a major concern and that they have been adequately informed about the dangers from their parents, driving schools and various advertisements of government bodies from time to time. They also accepted that they need to be careful of the speed while driving. All students accepted that talking on phone and drunk driving is a serious concern and should be avoided as far as possible. 99 (88.39%) students accepted that lane cutting can lead to serious problem and should be done by proper signalling and slowly. 105 (93.75%) students accepted that keeping car in good condition, especially brakes and tyres is important.

53 (75.71%) students who have their own car accepted that they follow traffic rules regularly and that they have not violated any rule before. 20 (60.60%) students out of the 33 who avail carpooling agreed that they advise their friends about healthy ways of driving on their way to work/play. 30 (42.85%) students avoid night driving as it creates confusion in their mind regarding taking any crucial decision while driving.

Being a self-report, there is the possibility of underestimation of motorcar accidents. The points listed in the study will help to understand the road traffic related knowledge and experiences of the new generation<sup>[1]</sup>.

## **References**

1. Ministry of Health Malaysia. Health Facts 2003.

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