Pattern of Pedestrian Injuries in the City of Nairobi: Implications for Urban Safety Planning

Ogendi, J; Odero, W; Mitullah, W; Khayesi, M

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Abstract:

Pedestrians are overrepresented in road traffic injuries and deaths in Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya, yet little research has been done to provide better understanding of the characteristics of pedestrian injuries. This paper presents the data obtained from road traffic injury admissions to Kenyatta National Hospital (KNH) over a 3-month period starting from 1 June to 31 August 2011. A total of 176 persons involved road traffic injuries in Nairobi were admitted to KNH during this period. Pedestrians comprised the highest (59.1 %) proportion of road traffic injury admissions, followed by motor vehicle passengers (24.4 %) and motor cyclists (9.7 %). Bicyclists and drivers accounted for 5.1 and 1.7 %, respectively. Cars (39.4 %) were the leading category of motorized four-wheeler vehicles that were involved in collisions with pedestrians, followed by matatus (35.5 %). Seventy percent of pedestrians were hit while crossing the road, 10.8 % while standing by the road, and 8.1 % while walking along the road. The highest proportion of pedestrian crashes occurred on Saturdays (25.5 %) and Sundays (16.7 %). Most of the pedestrian injuries (67.7 %) affected the limbs. The paper argues that safety of pedestrians should be a priority in road safety efforts in the city of Nairobi. Urban road safety planners should adopt existing cost-effective interventions to improve the safety of pedestrians such as area-wide traffic calming to limit the speeds of motor vehicles to 30 km/h, providing sidewalks for pedestrians, traffic calming in residential neighborhoods, people-and-not-car-oriented urban road designs, traffic education, and enforcement of traffic regulations.