

Pre-hospital care given to road traffic injury patients in Tanzania: a cross-sectional study

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Background: Injury is among the leading causes of morbidity and mortality worldwide, with road traffic injuries on the rise, accounting for 16% of the global burden of disease. Despite the observed burden, the provision of initial care remains a big challenge, especially in low- and middle-income countries.

Objective: To identify the initial care given to road traffic injury patients who were admitted to Muhimbili Orthopedic Institute in Tanzania.

Methodology: The study employed a cross-sectional design to obtain information on post-crash trauma experiences from a consecutive sample of 132 road traffic injury patients admitted to trauma units of the Muhimbili Orthopedic Institute in Tanzania from January to February 2016. The obtained data were then entered into a statistical program (SPSS version 20.0) for analysis.

Results: Males were more commonly involved in crashes than women, with a male-to-female ratio of 3:1 and the peak age of 20-29 years. The common responders reported were bystanders (70%), who provided extrication (55%), psychological support (29%), breathing support (7%), bleeding control (2%), and fluid rehydration (1%). Most participants reported having been transported to the health facility by private cars (38%), while only 2% used an ambulance.

Conclusion: Road traffic injuries are common in Tanzania, affecting young men in their productive ages. When they get into accidents, their lives remain in the hands of untrained first responders.

Keywords: Pre-hospital care, road traffic injury, Tanzania, cross-sectional study.

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Consent to participate: Written informed consent was obtained from all participants.

Ethical approval: The study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences, dated January 2016.

Already known information about the topic: Lack of well-established pre-hospital care remains a significant obstacle to delivering high-quality acute pre-hospital care services in Tanzania.