

Road traffic accident (R.T.A.) as major killer: a report on medico-legal autopsies in Bharatpur hospital

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Abstract

Road traffic accidents are the major cause of medico-legal deaths. In present study out of 229 autopsy cases in one year, 110 deaths were due to road traffic accident (R.T.A.) which shows the magnitude of the problem in Chitwan and adjacent districts in Nepal.

Key words: Road traffic accidents (R.T.A.), autopsy.

Road traffic Accidents (R.T.A.) has emerged as an important aspect of medico-legal investigations during recent years in Nepal. It has been observed that R.T.A. has got multifactorial causes¹. Since the causes of R.T.A. are diverse in nature, damage caused by R.T.A. are from trivial injury to gross bodily damage leading to death². Due to increasing traffic and peculiar geographical situation of Bharatpur, incident of R.T.A. are of utmost importance. Situation of Bharatpur is peculiar in the sense that this is the junction of all parts of Eastern, Western, Northern, and Southern regions of the country. Therefore traffic overload is immense in this area.

Material and Method

Present study includes 229 post mortem examinations conducted during the period of whole one year from 1st Baisakh to 30th Chaitra (April 2000 – March 2001) at the Bharatpur hospital, Bharatpur district, Chitwan, Nepal.

Cause of death were recorded from the statement of relatives, the inquest report and confirmed by the autopsy records maintained in the Bharatpur hospital. Data was analyzed by simple arithmetic methods.

Result

Total of 229 autopsy cases were included in the study, of which 153 were males and 66 females. Average age range at presentation was 2-78 years. Out of total cases, 110 cases died due to Road Traffic Accident (R.T.A.), 47 due to hanging, 39 due to poisoning, 16 due to drowning, 8 due to fire arm injury, 5 due to animal bite and 4 cases died due to burns.

Of all 110 cases of R.T.A. 83 were males and 27 were females. It was observed that female cases were the poor unfortunate accompaniment to die with their male counterpart in R.T.A.

Table 1 distribution of causes of death

S.N.	Cause of death	Number (n=229)	Percentage
1	Road Traffic Accident (R.T.A.)	110	47%
2	Hanging	47	20%
3	Poisoning	39	17%
4	Drowning	16	7%
5	Fire arm injuries	8	4%
6	Animal bite	5	3%
7	Burn	4	2%

Discussion

Road Traffic Accidents (R.T.A.) are the worst part of any accident, which has become universal due to traffic overload³. Entire world is emphasizing over the means to reduce R.T.A. to its minimum level⁴. But due to involvement of various factors it is almost impossible to eliminate it. In Nepal, since the people

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have to travel through roads mainly, incidence of R.T.A. is very high. Moreover, many people drive in drunken state, which is also a major contributing

factor to RTA⁵. Inadverant drivers, especially young guys on motorbike are the important vulnerable groups to suffer from R.T.A. Traffic overload is the major contributing factor fro R.T.A. Some people violate the traffic rules and regulations and ultimately get involved in RTA⁵. Hilly, tortuous and serpentine road is another factor for R.T.A.

Present study supports the fact that R.T.A. is the major causes of death among the medico-legal autopsy cases in this region also. Various factors mentioned above are operating in this region also, to have high incidence of R.T.A.

Conclusions

Based upon the present study following conclusions and suggestions are made:

1. R.T.A. is the major cause of death among all medico-legal autopsy cases.
2. Number of males involved in R.T.A. is more than number of females.
3. Strict implementation of traffic rules and regulations are important measures to avoid R.T.A.

4. Social awareness to avoid alcohol and narcotics during driving should be emphasized.
5. Smooth and steady, well controlled driving minimizes R.T.A.
6. Improvement of road conditions will be another important measure to control R.T.A.

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