

A study conducted by NIMHANS with the support of the Bangalore Police has come up with startling statistics to indicate the correlation between alcohol consumption and road accidents.

KEY FINDINGS

6%

Fatal and 15% non-fatal pedestrian injuries in children below 15 years

51%

Killed and 58% injured among men between 15 and 45 years

17%

Pedestrian deaths and 10% non-fatal injuries among elderly

Drunken driving on the rise



ALCOHOL EFFECT: Remains of the car that mowed down four people in Indiranagar last week.

DH file photo

DH NEWS SERVICE

BANGALORE: Injury Surveillance Data released by Nimhans points to the fact that about one third of crashes at night are linked to alcohol consumption.

The Bangalore Injury Surveillance Programme (BISP) conducted by Nimhans indicated that alcohol was identified in about 11% of police checks and 38% of road traffic injury registrations at hospitals. The study stated that about 15% to 30% of injured patients admitted to hospitals at night were under the influence of alcohol.

Information made available by the Bangalore City Police has shown a dramatic increase in the number of cases booked for drunken driving. From about 15,000 cases in 2003, the number had doubled by 2007. And, the number is likely to increase for the year 2008 with the first half of the year alone resulting in over 15,000 bookings. Although, this

might be an indicator of better law enforcement, Police say that imposing a fine is not sufficient.

Other significant outcomes of the report were the identification of Road Traffic Injuries as the third leading cause of death and the occurrence of a majority of accidents between 2 am and 6 am. "Road traffic injuries are becoming rampant with the city's growth and now need to be addressed as a public health concern," said Dr G Gururaj, Head, Department of Epidemiology, speaking at the launch of a Road Traffic Injury Surveillance Programme feasibility report.

Data also indicates that nearly 40% of crashes were due to excessive speed. While the study identified road rage as a contributor to speeding, poor roads and overtaking from both sides resulted in accidents. The data was collected from 25 major hospitals around the city and the Police.

A third of accidents in Bangalore city are due to drunken driving

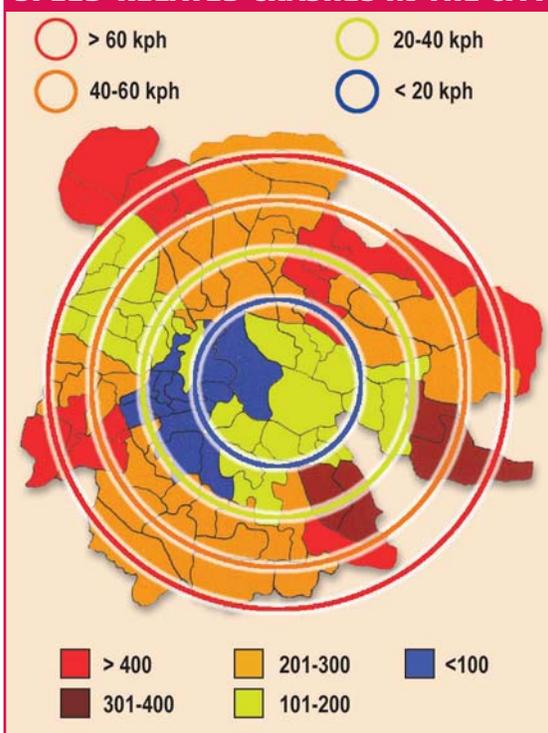
Pedestrians are not safe

Bangalore ranks as the worst among metros in pedestrian safety. According to the Bangalore Injury Surveillance programme (BISP), the pedestrian walkability index in Bangalore is 0.63, less than any other metro in the country.

The data collected for a period of one year, shows that pedestrians contribute to half the deaths and one-fourth of hospital registrations. In one year 485 deaths and 6,313 hospitalisations were reported by the police and hospitals. Given that the data was collected from 21 hospitals, the actual number could be much higher. Estimates from BISP also indicates that nearly 550 pedestrians are killed on an average every year with more than 10,000 injured. According to a study conducted in 2007, Karnataka as a whole also figures among the top ten states with the highest number of pedestrian deaths with 692.

The Bangalore Injury Surveillance programme (BISP) has identified that about 60 - 70% of fatalities among two-wheeler riders were due to head injury. It stated that motorcyclists who do not wear helmets are at a much higher risk of sustaining head injuries. Quoting previous studies, the report states that helmet usage reduces the severity of injuries by about 72% and reduces the chances of death by about 39%.

SPEED-RELATED CRASHES IN THE CITY



Killer two-wheelers

There has been a phenomenal increase in the number of two-wheelers in city over the last few years. Nearly three-fourths of registered vehicles in the city are two-wheelers. According to the fact sheet provided by NIMHANS Bangalore Injury Surveillance Programme, deaths and injuries in accidents involving two-wheelers are on the rise. The number of deaths rose from 200 in 2000 to 346 in 2007. As many as 2,798 sustained injuries in accidents involving two-wheelers in 2007.

Statistics also reveal that nearly three-fourths of fatal

and 82 per cent of non-fatal two-wheeler injuries were in the age group of 16-45 years. The report also states that among those who suffered fatal injuries, more than half the two-wheelers were moving at high speed at the time of the crash. More than half of the injured and killed motorcyclists had not worn helmets, indicating the need for scaling enforcement.

Only 2 per cent of the fatal injuries occurred under the influence of alcohol. However, the number could be much higher as this information was not documented in all the crashes.

Disturbing facts

Increase in number of vehicles has led to an increase in number of road accidents. Nearly 3.1 million vehicles ply on the roads of Bangalore today as against 0.7 million about 10 years ago. The number of road fatalities has gone up by nearly 40 per cent compared to 2000.

The National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) has, in its study, observed that the increase in vehicular movement over the past 10 years has been directly proportional to the road fatalities. The study states, "For every death, an estimated 40 persons are likely to be hospitalised with 70 other sustaining minor injuries."

The study, on using geographical mapping of road accidents, deaths, injuries occurrence has revealed that the number of accidents on the peripheries and outskirts of the City is more than that in the heart of the City which has a heavy traffic congestion.

There were 943 deaths reported in 2007 for Bangalore. With an estimated under-reporting of 10 per cent, the total deaths can be calculated to over 1,000 deaths in total for that year.

- 84 per cent of deaths were reported amongst men
- 29 per cent of fatal and 38 per cent of road injuries occurred in the age-group of 21 to 30 years
- While children contribute for 5 per cent of the deaths, elderly account for 13 per cent of fatal injuries.

