

Illegal motorcycle street racing- a growing threat to public safety

Madiha Mumshad¹, Aisha Ashraf²

Madam, Injury and death as a result of road traffic accidents are now acknowledged as a global phenomenon. According to WHO fact sheet greater than 1 million people lose their lives to road traffic accidents annually. On an average road crashes account for 1% of gross national product in developing countries annually.^{1,2}

An important issue which is mostly overlooked in Pakistan is that of illegal motorcycle street racing by young riders. The statistics of 2010 from Pakistan, show that over 47% of the road traffic accidents occurred as a result of careless driving and speeding of motorcyclists.² Despite the alarming attention that it receives in the media, there is a lack of substantial preventive measures by the concerned authorities and the local government. Moreover, the trending wave of motorcycle racing is gaining popularity due to the admiration that it receives on social media. Also, the benefits of monetary prize attracts a majority of low income and uneducated individuals. According to Jessor, predisposition to risk-taking behaviour stems from five domains: biology/genetic, social environment, perceived environment, personality, and behaviour.³ This evil is impacting people directly as well as indirectly with not only accidental injuries but also with the loss of life over disputes. Most of the participants fall well under the age of owning a valid driver's license. Due to the high speed and uncontrollable nature of these accidents, the injuries that result are life threatening such as devastating internal injuries, skull fractures, and spinal injuries.⁴

It is imperative to be up to date with current statistics of illegal motorcycle racing in Pakistan. Unfortunately, Pakistan's only researching center on road accidents which

1 Student Final Year, Karachi Medical and Dental College; 2 Aga Khan University Hospital, Karachi, Pakistan.

Correspondence: Madiha Mumshad. e-mail: madiha.mumshad@gmail.com

collected data and conducted road safety audits has been shut down due to lack of interest from Sindh government.⁵ In view of the given information, we would like to make a plea to the government of Pakistan to undertake consequential steps towards either abolishing or strictly regulating these races, we suggest following steps should be taken:

- Documentaries about Illegal Street racing victims of road traffic accidents for creating public awareness.
- Education of youth regarding safety gear use.
- Establishment of regulated racing tracks.
- Penalty imposition on illegal motorcycle racers.
- Social media campaigns against illegal motorcycle racing.

Disclaimer: None to declare.

Conflict of Interest: None to declare.

Funding Sources: None to declare.

References

1. World Health Organization. Road Traffic Injuries. Available from: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/road-traffic-injuries> [Accessed 19th February 2018].
2. Batool Z, Carsten O, Jopson A. Road safety issues in Pakistan: a case study of Lahore. *Transport plan Tech.* 2012; 35: 31-48.
3. Jessor R. Risk behavior in adolescence: a psychosocial framework for understanding and action. *J Adoles Health.* 1991; 12: 597-605.
4. Faduyile F, Emiogun F, Soyemi S, Oyewole O, Okeke U, Williams O. Pattern of injuries in fatal motorcycle accidents seen in Lagos State University teaching hospital: an autopsy-based study. *Maced J Med Sci.* 2017; 5: 112-116.
5. Azam, O. Pakistan's only research centre for road accidents shuts down. *The Express Tribune* [newspaper on the internet]. 2017 May 1 [cited 2018 Dec 14]. Available from: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1397779/pakistans-research-centre-road-accidents-shuts/>