

Monitoring road safety progress in Europe requires the best data

Road traffic injuries are a major public health problem.¹ The UN mandates WHO to monitor road safety through a series of *Global Status Report on Road Safety*. In the 2018 edition of the global status report, WHO generated estimates on road traffic fatalities for all its member states on the basis of data from 2016.² To enable international comparisons and application of standardised methods, in the 2019 report,³ countries were grouped into four categories: countries with eligible vital registration data for cause of death (group 1); countries with other sources of data for cause of death (group 2); small population (group 3); and countries without eligible vital registration data on cause of death (group 4).

The method applied to group 1 considers several factors: latest available vital registration data and their completeness, level of detail in the International Classification of Disease codes⁴ to identify road traffic deaths, and proportion of deaths coded as "injuries from event of undetermined intent". Although no adjustments were applied to group 3, regression modelling was applied for groups 2 and 4. Details of the covariates used for the regression model are explained elsewhere.^{2,3}

As an example, following the release of the global status report, Russia (group 1) hosted several consultations involving all relevant ministries, agencies, and leading national scientific institutions on road traffic injuries to review WHO's national estimate on road traffic deaths. Through these consultations, comprehensive vital registration data were released for 2016. The new estimates that were generated were 19% lower than originally calculated and were in line with official data reported by the Ministry of the Interior of the Russian

Federation, which were also published in the global status report.^{2,3}

With close to 90% of countries in the WHO European region belonging to group 1, key messages for member states are that comprehensive data classified to detailed International Classification of Diseases 10th edition codes should be shared in a timely manner and that death certification and coding practices should be aligned to International Classification of Diseases recommendations.

Implementing these recommendations will improve ability to monitor progress towards the Sustainable Development Goal 3.6: "halve the number of road traffic death and injuries".⁵ WHO stands ready to support member states to strengthen coordination between sectoral data systems and facilitate an informed approach that includes the whole of government and the whole of society to policy making for road safety.

We declare no competing interests.

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1 WHO. Health statistics and information systems: global health estimates. Geneva: World Health Organization, 2016. https://www.who.int/healthinfo/global_burden_disease/en (accessed March 4, 2020).

2 WHO. Global Status Report on road safety 2018. Geneva: World Health Organization. June 17, 2018. https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/road_safety_status/2018/en (accessed Feb 11, 2020).

3 WHO. European regional status report on road safety 2019. Copenhagen: World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe. April 30, 2020. <http://www.euro.who.int/en/roadsafetyreport2019> (accessed April 30, 2020).

4 WHO. International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, 10th edn. Geneva: World Health Organization, 2016. <https://icd.who.int/browse10/2016/en> (accessed March 4, 2020).

5 UN. Transforming our world: the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. New York: United Nations Organization, 2015. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld> (accessed Feb 11, 2020).



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