

Editorial

Editorial: Two-wheeler Accidents and Foot and Ankle Safety: An Ignored Concept?

Greetings! This year our editorial focusses on the problem of two-wheeler safety in the context of foot and ankle injuries.

We lose the population equivalent of a small city every year!!

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways released their detailed accident report for 2017 on their website. The report states that a total of 4,64,910 road accidents have been reported countrywide in 2017, claiming 1,47,913 lives and causing injuries to 4,70,975 persons. That is more than, say, the population of Greater Noida (1,07,676 as per 2011 census) or Shillong (1,43,229).

A huge concern is, that two-wheelers, which are the most preferred and affordable mode of personal transport, account for the highest share (33.9%) in total accidents and fatalities (29.8%) in 2017. Tamil Nadu in south India recorded the highest number of road accidents in 2017, but the number of persons killed in road accidents was the highest in Uttar Pradesh.

A number of studies from our country have correlated the importance of proper helmet use and survival in two-wheeler accidents, for both drivers and pillion riders. However, what is often ignored in studies is the severity of the foot and ankle injuries and the consequent morbidity and financial toll it implies as it is often the family bread-winner who is injured.

Any foot and ankle surgeon will tell you that injuries sustained are far worse when wearing sandals or “chappals” than shoes or boots. Coincidentally, any automotive journalist or professional racer will advise that the only way to minimize injury is “All the gear, All the time”. What that entails is a protective helmet, gloves, jacket, trousers and ankle high boots. That is a tall order for the lakhs of unaware office going commuters or even the casual bike rider in shorts and sandals.

The responsibility lies with us as foot and ankle surgeons to advise patients who are two-wheeler riders the importance of appropriate footwear, because unlike head injury patients, our patients do have a second chance!!

Suggested Reading

1. Bhalla K, Khurana N, Bose D, Navaratne KV, Tiwari G, Mohan D. Official government statistics of road traffic deaths in India under-represent pedestrians and motorised two wheeler riders. *Inj Prev* 2017 Feb;23(1):1-7.
2. Bhoi S, Singh A, Sinha TP, Pal R, Galwankar S, Baluja A, Ali S, Sharma V, Agrawal A. Magnitude and Spectrum of Injuries Sustained in Road Traffic Accidents Among Two Wheeler Riders and Correlation with Helmet Use. *J Emerg Trauma Shock* 2018 Jul-Sep;11(3):160-164.
3. Misra P, Majumdar A, Misra MC, Kant S, Gupta SK, Gupta A, Kumar S. Epidemiological Study of Patients of Road Traffic Injuries Attending Emergency Department of a Trauma Center in New Delhi. *Indian J Crit Care Med* 2017 Oct;21(10):678-683.
4. Siddiqui SM, Sagar S, Misra MC, Gupta A, Crandall M, Swaroop M. Patterns of injury among motorized two-wheeler pillion riders in New Delhi, India. *J Surg Res* 2016 Sep;205(1):142-146.



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