

Road Traffic Accidents in Bahrain

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Objective: To determine (a) the incidence of Road Traffic Accident (RTA) casualties treated at Salmaniya Medical Complex (SMC) and its distribution characteristics; (b) injury severity and casualty types; and (c) the affect on SMC health system.

Method: A total of 23,006 RTA casualties between the ages of 1 to 99 years from 1996 to 2001 were studied at SMC Emergency and Inpatient facilities. The data were collected from database of case records.

Results: The incidence of RTA casualties treated at SMC were 73.59% Bahrainis, 26.38 % non-Bahrainis. Male Bahraini drivers between the age of 15 and 29 represented 13.90% of RTA casualties treated at SMC. Drivers between the age of 15 to 17 inclusive, accounted for 187 of RTA casualties between 1996 and 2001.

The incidence of RTA injuries treated at SMC indicated 42.5% increase in casualties treated from 1996 to 2001. Slight injuries increased 27.2% while ambulance cases increased by 244.6% and inpatient admissions increased by 18.8%. Inpatient deaths decreased by 75%. SMC records indicate that the incidence of death is decreasing while police reports indicate that the incidence of death has increased by 75%. SMC records do not include all police recorded deaths, and police records do not include SMC inpatient deaths unless payment cases.

Fractures represented 46.76% of all inpatient injuries, followed by intra-cranial injuries (29.76%). Total days of care for RTA casualties over six years were 31,595 days with an estimated economic cost of 3,097,869.7 Bahrain Dinars.

Conclusion: The evidence strongly supports the need for tougher enforcement of legislation and policy for speed limits, seat belts, driver education programs, and collaborative studies to support road traffic accident prevention and safety.