Determining the Causes of Child Road Deaths and Injuries in Lebanon
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Children between 0-5 are most at risk of dying as a result of road crashes, as revealed by Save the Children’s latest study.

With support from the FIA Foundation, Save the Children has commissioned the American University of Beirut to carry out research to understand the nature and characteristics of child road traffic injuries and deaths in Lebanon. This marked the first study to capture national retrospective data on the problem in the country.

The study uses data from across hospital and police reports recorded between 2015-2017. It has found that vulnerable road users (pedestrians, motorcyclists and cyclists) encompass nearly half of the child road traffic injuries or 47%. Expectedly, speed is the greatest cause leading to tragic consequences.

Traffic Injuries and Deaths: A Snapshot

In Numbers: Young Lives at Risk on Our Roads

1. Children between 0-5 are most at risk of dying as a result of a road crash, with 12% suffering fatal injuries
2. Children are most likely to die in road traffic incidents when they are pedestrians (61%)
3. The average age of a child who sustains a road traffic injury is 11 years old
4. Two-thirds of children sustaining road traffic injuries are Lebanese and over one-quarter are Syrian
5. Children aged 15-17 are significantly more likely to suffer road traffic injuries while riding a motorcycle
6. 36% of road traffic injuries sustained by Lebanese children occur when the child is in a 4-wheel vehicle, while 24% occur while the child is a pedestrian (walking)
7. On the other hand, Syrian children are significantly more likely to suffer road traffic injury as pedestrians (52%), rather than as passengers in a 4-wheeled vehicle (19%)
8. The number of road traffic injuries sustained by children peaks in summer (32%) and declines in winter (20%)
9. A clear majority (54%) of deaths take place on two-way roads that are not divided by a physical barrier
Lack of child restraint use is associated with high risk of mortality.

Children suffering severe injuries to the head and neck are likely to have suffered severe blows to the head against a hard surface.

Children under 5 are more at risk if the child is unrestrained or is in the front seat or on an individual’s lap.

Research found 140 cases of children while driving 4-wheel vehicles, and 313 driving motorcycles. Up to 16.4% of 4-wheel vehicle drivers and 6.4% of young motorcyclists died.

MAKING OUR STREETS SAFER FOR CHILDREN: RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Ensure proper injury coding and establish national injury surveillance system**: A comprehensive injury surveillance system should be developed that connects hospitals and public safety institutions and includes complementary data collection.

2. **Enforce road safety laws, particularly those intended to protect children**: Public safety institutions should enforce Lebanon’s road safety legislation, with special attention to regulations that implicate children’s safety.

3. **Implement evidence-based road safety policies and behavior change programs**: The Government of Lebanon as well as aid agencies should adopt an evidence-based approach to social change, aimed at encouraging safe behavior among pedestrians and drivers. Traffic police should work to protect children even when their caregivers are unaware of the risks.

4. **Invest in safer road infrastructure**: The Government of Lebanon should direct funds originating from the CEDRE Conference Capital Investment Plan to transportation infrastructure improvements. Such measures should include traffic calming measures to reduce vehicle speed and regulate pedestrian traffic.