Reviewer's report

Title: Road traffic injury surveillance in a low income country: translating numbers into action

Version: 3 Date: 23 March 2011

Reviewer: Rakhi Dandona

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The revised manuscript is now focused on process rather than data, which is fine, as long as enough information is provided on the process. Some previous comments have not been addressed, and the following information is desirable to optimize the utility of sharing this experience.

Minor essential revision

1. Page 5, paragraph 3
a. Please define medico-legal certificate as all readers may not be familiar with this term/process.
b. The terms “hospital” and “trauma centre” are used interchangeably here (unless there are government run trauma centres). Please recheck.

Major compulsory revision

2. Introduction
a. Previous work done by this group provides insight into the underreporting of injuries in the police system in Pakistan (Int J Epidemiol 1998;27:86-870). This has neither been cited nor used as a context.
b. Please state in the manuscript that no formal needs assessment was carried out as the previous work provided sufficient base to proceed with establishing this surveillance.
c. A clear statement on the objectives of the surveillance system should be provided.

3. Page 5, paragraph 3 - Please explain what is meant by “no records are kept” for visits to the emergency department.

4. Figure 1
a. Please provide legends.
b. Please provide the number of staff in the boxes where relevant for the readers to get a more complete idea about how large this undertaking was.

5. Data collection – This section could benefit with more description as highlighted below:
a. How the patients were identified who needed to be documented in this surveillance system?

b. Were all road traffic injury patients irrespective of severity of injury covered in this surveillance?

c. The sequence of steps for data collection is not clear. Was the patient first point of contact for data? Where data collected from medical records and supplemented by patient for missing information? When were police records used? Who completed the medical information in the data collection form?

d. Since the staff for data collection was available round-the-clock, in which situations was data sought from hospital or police records?

e. Page 7, paragraph 2 – Please specify that surveillance was carried out round-the-clock with data collectors working in shifts.

6. Table 1

a. Surveillance is likely to capture more non-fatal injuries as expected. Please provide this information for moderate to severe injuries because surveillance for “all injuries” is neither necessary nor good use of limited resources.

b. The >2 times difference in fatal injuries between surveillance and police records merits some discussion. Where are these extra deaths coming from which have been missed by police? Are there data points that researchers in developing countries should be aware of in order to capture all deaths?

7. Cost of surveillance: This still needs to more specific for each component in order to have more utility for readers intending to plan such a system or improve the current system. Also, cost of on-site data collection should be presented separately as it is not necessary to have this component in routine surveillance.

8. The revised manuscript is now focused on process rather than data, which is fine, as long as enough information is provided on the process. What is missing is what happens once data are collected by the data collectors at the data management level, and how routinely these data are analyzed to assess the quality and current situation of RTI.

9. Some limitations of the approach taken by the authors should also be discussed.

10. Sustainability of this system, in particular ownership or buy-in from the government, needs more discussion than what has been done in this manuscript.

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**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable
Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
'I declare that I have no competing interests'