Reviewer's report

Title: Motorcyclist reactions to safety helmet law: a qualitative study

Version: 2 Date: 18 August 2009

Reviewer: Parissa Safai

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review a revised draft of "Motorcyclists Reactions to Safety Helmet Law: A Qualitative Study" and my apologies for the delay in providing feedback. The authors have strengthened significantly with their careful attention to reviewers' comments. That said, I still recommend that this paper be revised and resubmitted since there remain a number of major compulsory revisions to be addressed. A comment about language and style. The authors have significantly improved the language employed in the manuscript; however, there remain too many grammatical and sentence structure errors in the manuscript. My remaining comments have been organized by page number:

P. 1: The authors acknowledge that there is no need to identify Iran as a developing country and yet the third sentence of the manuscript refers to motorcycle fatalities in developing countries. Why? Furthermore, in the second paragraph, although the authors do discuss traffic patterns/conditions in Iran, there is still no discussion as to why mandatory helmet laws were seriously enforced in 2002. Did this enforcement come into effect as a result of public demand? Pressure from lobby groups? Decisions on the part of the police? This contextual information is needed because it impacts your participants' experiences and comments and the analysis must acknowledge this. The analysis must also acknowledge the limited length of time that these laws have been seriously enforced. Currently there is no discussion to this effect.

P. 3: The methods section is greatly improved. However, that said, I still remain unclear as to why only male motorcyclists were recruited. The authors do acknowledge that not all motorcyclists are male and yet only men were eligible to participate.

P. 4: The authors do need to address the issue of translation briefly. What considerations were made in translating Farsi to English? How were metaphors or slang words treated? Were comments edited for clarity in the manuscript?

P. 7: I was disappointed to see what little mention was made of the police officers. As far as I can see, the only time we hear from them is on p. 7. I appreciate that the focus of this manuscript is on motorcyclists' reactions; however, to neglect the police officers so markedly is to miss out on key pieces of the puzzle. Clearly the motorcyclists are reacting in relation to the police officers (or to their perceptions of the police officers), but what are the officers
doing? It seems that the authors have this rich data and I encourage them to use it.

P. 12: It is unclear how inconvenience and the uncomfortable nature of the helmet are structural factors.

P. 13: The discussion of risk perception has been improved but it still needs development. It is still unclear how the authors distinguished individuals in the different categories. Furthermore, the literature on risk and risk-taking is far more nuanced -- Ulrich Beck, Mary Douglas, Deborah Lupton are but a few key international contributors. If the authors choose to continue theorizing about risk perception among their sample, the analysis needs to be strengthened.

P. 14: The authors introduce masculinity into their discussion but this is quite under-developed. There is a rich body of research exploring the social construction of masculinity in relation to risk and risk-taking that needs to be explored. Furthermore, the last five lines of the page seem out of place in relation to the rest of the paragraph ("Also, a study from Iran showed...summer (23.2%)"

P. 15: The middle paragraph ("Currently, in keeping with...obtaining a drivers license" needs to be incorporated into the paragraph below it.

P. 15: The authors have decided to mention religion and family as important social institutions. This could very well be the case but this discussion needs to be developed far more extensively and more critically. For example, is there any evidence to suggest that other nations have employed family-centric or religious messaging in promoting helmet safety?

P. 16: The discussion on traffic laws and officers reinforces the need for data from your law enforcement participants.

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

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**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.