



International Federation of
Library Associations and Institutions

Public Access to Health Information





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Road Accidents and Safety

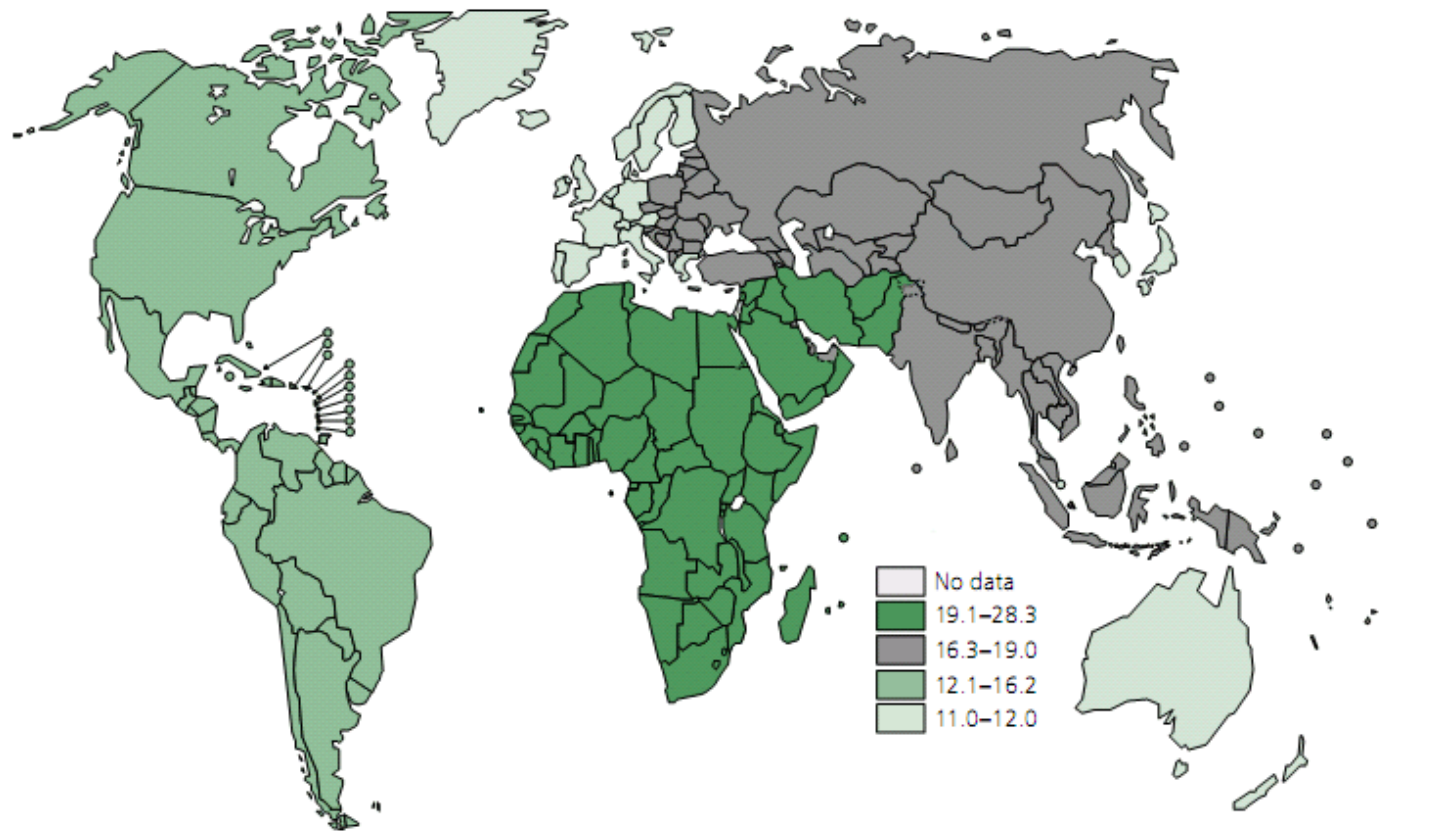


Road Accidents as a Health Problem

- Road accidents are currently ranked as the 9th largest health problem globally
- If current trends continue they could be the 3rd largest problem by 2020.
- Each year an estimated 1.2 million people are killed and 50 million injured worldwide
- It is a particularly bad problem in the developing world, which has the highest rates of accidents and deaths
- The estimated total cost in developing countries is US \$65 billion per year



Number of deaths from traffic in 2002 (per 100,000 persons)



Case study: Kenya

- More than 3000 people die each year in road accidents in Kenya with many more seriously injured.
- Matatus (private minibuses) are often to blame
 - Poorly maintained vehicles
 - Overloading
 - Reckless drivers.
- An information campaign (using stickers with a simple message encouraging passengers to speak out) reduced accidents by 50% where it was used.





Information campaigns

- Information can be used to target
 - Drivers
 - Pedestrians
 - Animal keepers
- encouraging them to think about safety.
- Authorities responsible for roads, public service vehicles (such as buses), and freight transport, can be encouraged to introduce measures for better safety and enforce existing regulations.



Drivers

- Drivers need to be reminded of the dangers of
 - Carelessness
 - Excessive speed
 - Driving under the influence of drink or drugs
 - Not maintaining their vehicles properly
 - Using cell phones while driving





Pedestrians

- Pedestrians need awareness of
 - How to walk along roads and cross safely
 - The importance of keeping animals under control on or near roads
 - Training children how to behave on the roads.



The importance of information

- Some countries (chiefly in Western Europe) have succeeded in bringing down accident and fatality rates each year.
- This is done by a combination of various measures
 - Road maintenance and improvements
 - Better vehicle safety features
 - Strict policing of traffic laws
 - Making sure that people understand safety and know how to behave on the roads
- This last aspect is done through good information and may be the most important part of the whole package of measures.



What Libraries can do

- Collect and make available material on road safety
- Get involved with safety campaigns by
 - Displaying posters
 - Making library premises available for training and awareness sessions for drivers and pedestrians
- Partner with government and NGO campaigns on safety
- Work with children on road safety, through clubs which can teach safety drills, understanding road signs, first aid, etc.

