

Rear Seat Belt Use in Developing Countries: A Case Study from the United Arab Emirates

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Abstract : The seat belt is a vital tool in improving traffic safety conditions and minimising injuries due to traffic accidents. Most developing countries are facing a big problems associated with the human and financial losses due to traffic accidents. One way to minimise these losses is the use of seat belts by passengers both in the front and rear seats of a vehicle; however, at the same time, close to nothing is known about the rates of seat belt utilisation among rear seat passengers in many developing countries. Therefore, there is a need to estimate these rates in order to know the extent of this problem and how people interact with traffic safety measures like seat belts and find demographic characteristics that contribute to wearing or non-wearing of seat belts with the aim of finding solutions to improve wearing rates. In this paper, an observational study was done to gather data on restraints use in motor vehicle rear seats in eight observational stations in a rapidly developing country, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and estimate a use rate for the whole country. Also, a questionnaire was used in order to study demographic characteristics affecting the wearing of seatbelts in rear seats. Results of the observational study showed that the overall wearing/usage rate was 12.3%, which is considered very low when compared to other countries. Survey results show that single, male, less educated passengers from Arab and South Asian backgrounds use seat belts reportedly less than others. Finally, solutions are put forward to improve this wearing rate based on the results of this study.

Keywords : Seat belts, traffic crashes, United Arab Emirates, rear seats

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