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# PERCEPTION OF HEALTH CARE WORKERS (HCWS) ON PREVENTING ROAD TRAFFIC INJURY (RTI) IN VANUATU: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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# INTRODUCTION

- About 2.4 million individuals are injured through RTA each year.
- In LMIC of our region, it is predicted that increasing motorization will make RTI the leading cause of death among young people beyond 2020.
- More than half the people injured or killed in traffic crashes are young adults aged between 15 and 44 years often the breadwinners in a family.



# INTRODUCTION

- The high death rate of RTI in Vanuatu at 16 per 100,000 populations demonstrates that the Vanuatu roads are of the most dangerous or that Vanuatu drivers are the most reckless in the region.
- The common cause of road accidents in Vanuatu is over speeding
- There is no dedicated road transport policy in Vanuatu
- Despite the burden of RTI borne by youth in LMIC, RTI prevention efforts in these settings are hindered by significant gaps in knowledge regarding associated contextual factors
- The views of HCWs on how to prevent RTIs are of utmost importance, since they see the problems and the impact caused by RTIs



## AIM AND RESEARCH QUESTION

- *This study aims to explore and understand the perception of Health Care Workers (HCW) on risk factors and the existing prevention strategy of RTI in Vanuatu.*
- What are the perception of HCWs on common factors related to road traffic accident/injuries and its prevention in Vanuatu?
- What are the perception of HCWs on the challenges faced and solutions to address RTIs in Vanuatu?



# METHODS

- Focus group discussions were conducted among health care workers, including public health officers, nurses and doctors, in the three main referral hospitals (VCH, NPH and Lenakel) between October 1 and November 15 of 2020
- A semi-structured and open ended questionnaire was developed to guide the discussions
- Data from digital recorders and any additional notes taken during FGDs were transcribed using Microsoft Word.
- Thematic analysis was used based on both predetermined issues of interest as well as new issues raised by the respondents for these focus groups

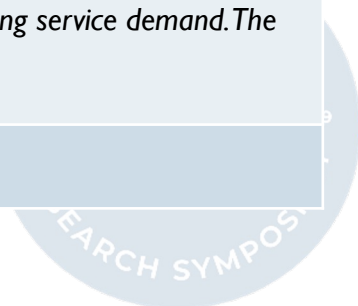


# RESULTS

Themes / Sub Themes	Quotes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Significance and trends of RTI               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RTI – a public health issue</li> <li>• RTI – a silent epidemic</li> <li>• Severity of RTI</li> <li>• Common Victims of RTI</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><i>“Injuries caused from RTAs is out of control and the department of public health must take it seriously and address it”</i></p> <p><i>“I think the authorities must pay more attention to RTA, it is a serious problem and the impact is devastating compare to other public health problems”.</i></p> <p><i>“Patients admitted to hospital due to RTI today would spend weeks and months in the hospital”.</i></p> <p><i>“The victims of RTI are young people aged between 20 to 30 and most of the time they are drunk. Victims are often young men but young girls also show up”.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Barriers to efficient care               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of human resources</li> <li>• Lack of emergency equipment</li> <li>• Lack of good emergency coordination</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><i>Our emergency units throughout the country lack work force, we rarely have doctors stationed at the emergency unit and the few nurses operating the emergency unit are often very busy. RTI are commonly very severe and many times, it requires all the nurses to attend to these victims leaving other patients unattended”.</i></p> <p><i>“Our emergency units do not have or do not have enough equipment that can manage multiple cases or very severe forms of RTIs”.</i></p> <p><i>“Our response services to RTI when alerted are very slow because of lack of leadership to provide directives for response. The private paramedical team are doing much better than us”.</i></p>

# RESULTS:

Themes / Sub Themes	Quotes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Hospital management capacity               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workload</li> <li>• High cost of care</li> <li>• Quality of care</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><i>“The longer it takes for one patient to be admitted, the workload remains high as surgical patients with other conditions and operations are always in and out”.</i></p> <p><i>“As much as it is costing the hospital to care for RTI patients, the relatives are also struggling to provide and care for these patients”.</i></p> <p><i>“When we are under pressure from the patients, we choose to try to attend to everyone and ignore the high standard of practice expected of us”.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Barriers to pre-hospital care               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of first aid knowledge</li> <li>• Involvement of lay people</li> <li>• Traffic obstruction</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><i>“Commonly people try to offer help but they do not have the appropriate first aid skills and instead of helping they worsen injuries”.</i></p> <p><i>“Laypeople can offer support by contacting the emergency services, help to put out fires or preventing harm to rescuers but not to mobilize the victims when help is already on the way”.</i></p> <p><i>“Many people do not understand or choose to ignore ambulance services and it has always cause delays to reach the crash site or to arrive at the hospital emergency unit with the injured victim”.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Addressing RTI               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual responsibility</li> <li>• Health system strengthening</li> <li>• Community education</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><i>“RTI could be minimized when individual road users including drivers, passengers and pedestrians take more responsibility for their safety and the safety of others”.</i></p> <p><i>“The emergency department need well trained and qualified personals as well as emergency equipment to meet the growing service demand. The emergency equipment that needs replacement or that are needed should be done already”.</i></p> <p><i>“People are not aware that we have a RTI epidemic in Vanuatu and they are not taking the issue seriously”.</i></p>



# DISCUSSION

## ➤ Main risk factors

- Inefficiencies in road traffic law enforcement
- Irresponsible Driver behavior
- Weak emergency response services

## ➤ Prevention of RTI

- Community education on road traffic issues
- Addressing driver behavior
- Health System Strengthening
- Reviewing the road traffic control act

## ➤ Challenges

- Inconsistent leadership in emergency units
- Shortage of resources (trained HR & emergency equipment)
- MOH Public health priorities





# RECOMMENDATIONS

- Establish pre-hospital emergency response networks and care systems
- Capacity building for hospital emergency workers
- Address emergency department's leadership, human resources and equipment issues
- Roll out evidence base programs to address driver behaviours
- Step up awareness programs through workshops and campaigns in all municipalities to educate all the vehicle drivers and road users on road safety issues



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Thank you to all MOH officers who participated in this study.

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