Successes and failures of road safety policy in Europe

Francesco Mitis
WHO Regional Office for Europe

Athens, 22 November 2012

mit@euro.who.int
Road traffic injuries: a leading cause of death

- 110,000 people die every year on the EURO roads
- Leading cause of death in 5-29 year olds
- Younger males more at risk
- Burden unevenly distributed
- Inequalities within countries
- Cost: 2-3% of GDP

Source: WHO, 2009 and WHO 2011
Road traffic injuries: a leading cause of death

- 110,000 people die every year on the EURO roads
- Leading cause of death in 5-29 year olds
- Younger males more at risk
- Burden unevenly distributed
- Inequalities within countries
- Cost: 2-3% of GDP

Source: WHO, 2009 and WHO 2011
A focus on European Union roads

• Around 30000 deaths in 2010, a bit over the target
• Data from European Road Safety Observatory
• Central repository of data and knowledge to support evidence-based road safety policy-making:
  – data
  – legislations
  – Policies
  – projects
  – ....
International response

- UN General Assembly resolutions
  - Appointed WHO as UN co-ordinator for road safety
  - Mandated a first Global Road Safety Week in 2007 (and a second in April 2012 – will be celebrated from 6 to 12 May)
  - Prepared ‘good practice’ manuals on key risk factors (helmets, seat belts, drink-driving, speed, child restraints)
  - Mandated the first ever global Ministerial Conference on road safety
  - Declared 2011-2020 a Decade of Action for Road Safety
- World Health Assembly and European Region resolutions
- EC Recommendations and Plan
- Synergy with European Alcohol Action Plan and policies
The Decade of Action for road safety

• Called for by UN resolution in March 2010 (tabled by Russian Federation)
• Runs from 2011-2020
• Launched on 11 May 2011
• Plan of action encourages action in 5 pillars
• 39 European countries have launched for the Decade of Action for Road Safety (3 with the Head of State)
Risk factors and policy response

- Alcohol, speed, not using safety equipment, and aspects of transport policy and unsafe road infrastructure.
- In the European Region only 33% of countries have comprehensive laws relating to five key risks: speeding, drinking and driving, and the non-use of helmets, seat-belts and child restraints.
  - Legislation will only be effective if enforced, and few countries report that this is effectively enforced
  - Results will be updated in February 2013
The facts: national strategies on road safety

- Half of all low- and middle-income do not have a national multi-sectoral strategy on road safety
- Even in those countries with a strategy, this often does not set measurable targets nor present a clear budget plan
Seat belts and helmet wearing

Correlation = -0.58

Correlation = -0.80

29 countries
Mortality adjusted for car ownership

Helmet wearing rate

16 countries

Front seat-belt wearing rate
Comprehensive road safety policies require numerous actions as demonstrated by the example of France but steep decline after 2002.
Successes and failures of road safety policy in Europe

Southwest Europe: Portugal

1975: Mandatory use of helmet on motor pedal cycle
1976: Portugal joined the European Union
1977: Mandatory use of front seat-belt outside urban areas
1978: Mandatory use of helmet on motor pedal cycle
1979: Mandatory use of front seat-belt outside urban areas
1980: Mandatory use of helmets for all two-wheel motor vehicle occupants
1981: Mandatory use of seat-belt by all occupants in all roads. Speed limits of 50km/h in urban areas.
1982: Drink-driving legislation. Maximum BAC>=0,8 g/l
1983: Reduction of BAC >=0,5 g/l
1984: Tachographs mandatory
1985: Criminalization on drink-driving if BAC>=1,20 g/l
1986: Mandatory use of seat-belt by all occupants in all roads. Speed limits of 50km/h in urban areas. Mandatory use of helmets for all two-wheel motor vehicle occupants
1987: Tachographs mandatory
1988: Mandatory periodic technical inspections
1989: Legislation on mandatory use of Child Restraints
1990: Legislation on mandatory use of Child Restraints
1991: Mandatory use of Child Restraints
1992: Mandatory periodic technical inspections
1993: Mandatory use of Child Restraints
1994: Mandatory use of Child Restraints
1995: Legislation on mandatory use of Child Restraints
1996: Mandatory use of Child Restraints
1997: Mandatory use of Child Restraints
1998: Mandatory use of Child Restraints
1999: Mandatory use of Child Restraints
2000: Mandatory use of Child Restraints
2001: Mandatory use of Child Restraints
2002: Mandatory use of Child Restraints
2003: National Road Safety Plan
2004: National Road Safety Plan
2005: National Road Safety Plan
2006: National Road Safety Plan
2007: National Road Safety Plan
2008: National Road Safety Plan
2009: National Road Safety Plan
2010: Legislation regarding the adoption of the international definition of death within 30 days of a road accident
Central and Eastern Europe: Latvia

From 1st of January, 1996:
- speed limit in built-up areas limited to 50 km/h;
- mandatory use of safety belts, helmets;
- mandatory use of head lights from 01.10. till 01.04.

From 1st of April, 1999:
- compulsory use of head lights at all time;
- compulsory use of child restraint systems;
- compulsory use of reflectors for pedestrians in darkness;
- compulsory use of winter tires from 01.12 till 01.03;
- use of mobile phone in vehicle only with hand free system;

From 1st of July, 2004:
- introduction of penalty point system;
- testing of riders of moped is mandatory for obtaining license.

Age-standardized mortality rate per 100,000
Southeast Europe: Serbia

1992-2000
Reduced traffic volumes on roads in Republic of Serbia, because of UN sanctions.

2002
Change of penal policy, higher penalties for traffic offenses, 7 to 10 times. Increased control of safety belts use.
CIS countries

- The countries of the Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia) appear to have RTI mortality rates which are stable of late and lower than those of the EU

- In contrast the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Belarus and the Republic of Moldova have RTI mortality rates far higher than the EU

- Size of the problem and implementation in Russian Federation
  - speed limits
  - seat-belts
Next steps

• Examine policy implementation for country groups using results of survey for European status report on road safety 2013

• Examine data for CIS countries

• Obtain detailed policy data for countries such as Estonia, Lithuania, Portugal, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Russian Federation, Sweden, France
Possible implications for health policy

• Successful policy: good governance structure, intersectoral working, policies with targets, lead authority for road safety, strong capacity, civil society involvement in safety, societal capacity etc

• Unsuccessful policy: e.g. poor governance, no road safety plan with targets, no lead authority, weak capacity, inadequate resources, etc.
Conclusions

• Need of better data
• Can the declines in RTI mortality be attributed to policy
• What is the reason for these between country differences
• Lessons for other areas of health policy
• Limitations of this approach:
  – difficulty in ascertaining if policy is implemented
  – shortfalls of trend analysis and looking for associations
  – difficulty in measuring infrastructure changes
  – transport policies for vulnerable road users
Successes and failures of road safety policy in Europe

February 2013
Global Status report on Road Safety 2

- Will be launched in February 2013
- A regional fact sheet
- Later on: a European report that should focus on pedestrian safety
- 51 countries out of 53 (no MON and TKM)
- Information on data availability, key risk factors, evidence-based interventions, national policy, trauma care
- Data collection started in April 2012