

Road safety under the prism of psychoactive substance consumption in the context of a rising southern hemisphere – great paradox?

OSegurança viária sob o prisma do consumo de substâncias psicoativas no contexto da ascensão do hemisfério sul – grande paradoxo?

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In 2050, according to the United Nations (UN), the economies of Brazil, China, and India will account for 40% of the global GDP. The comparative studies between various countries reveal that Brazil is in fourth place with the largest number of deaths in traffic behind China, India, and Nigeria. These deaths are connected to the human development index (HDI):

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HDI is based on education, longevity, and per capita income. None of the countries in the group of evolved and distributive capitalism, founded on quality of education for all, with dissemination of ethics and the rule of law, and the due process of law and proportionate (Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland, South Korea, Japan, Singapore, Austria, etc.) is among the 10 most violent countries on the planet. None of the 10 compared countries is in the group of those with higher HDI (47 in total), with the exception of the United States, which is responsible for the largest fleet of vehicles in the group and in the world. Nevertheless, it presents the fewest deaths per 100 thousand people (11.4 against 22 in Brazil).

The emphasis in these matters is justified by the persistence of high rates of mortality in traffic in Brazil, which are unacceptable in more than 376 municipalities reaching indexes higher than 200/100,000 inhabitants, with an estimated cost of 44.6 billion reais.

The development of programs on alcohol and driving is one of the most effective measures to reduce the number of deaths and injuries in public roads.

It is necessary to implement research studies to establish differences in socio-economic and epidemiological profiles from countries with per capita GDP similar to that of Brazil and its correlation between drinking and driving in the world. The selection of countries, in a range of GDP/per capita at 10% above and below that of Brazil in 2010 of 9,540.00 reais, selected three in the Americas (Argentina, Mexico, and Uruguay); two in Europe (Russian Federation and Turkey), one in the Eastern Mediterranean (Lebanon), and one in Africa (Republic of Seychelles). The results were as follows: the highest-income country was the Republic of Seychelles and the lowest was Argentina. Brazil has 194 946 488 inhabitants, with the absolute number of 36 499 deaths in 2010 and the highest rate of mortality in traffic of 22.5/100 000 inhabitants. All have a leader agency, such as the DENATRAN, and with road safety strategies, except Lebanon. Lebanon and Mexico do not have road safety criteria and mobility for the construction of new roads. All countries have devices to per-

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form regular inspections in their road infrastructure. Only the Russian Federation does not have policies to promote walking and cycling as means of transportation. Lebanon, Mexico, and the Republic of Seychelles do not rely on public transportation incentive policies. Brazil has the largest total fleet of registered vehicles, including those with four wheels; and 71% of those with three and two wheels. The largest fleet of heavy trucks is located in Mexico and in the Russian Federation. Brazil was among the minority who participated in the adherence in using front and rear seat belts; and participated partially in the construction of a system of penalty points in the driver's license for infractions on safety laws.

There are few data on the cost of accidents caused by drunk drivers. This is a serious public health issue in more than 376 municipalities scattered across all Brazilian regions where the rates of deaths in traffic accidents are above 30/100 000 inhabitants:

Prevention is by far the best option. A large portion of the knowledge, experience, and tools needed to build safer and salutary transportation systems is already available. The manufacturing

of safer vehicles and the construction of safer transit routes, the design of infrastructures with pedestrians and bicyclists in mind, improvement in public transportation, and personal behavior in traffic lanes, which would reduce traumas and contribute to a healthier population.

It is necessary that all countries acquire new concepts to reduce traffic accidents to the lowest levels as well as deaths in absolute numbers and mortality rates. One of the most important concepts is the understanding that traffic deaths could have been prevented, which shares with the zero vision, a strategy approved by the Swedish Parliament in 1997 and adopted by the European Union countries. It is based on the principle that it should never be ethically acceptable for someone to die or be seriously injured while moving in the road transportation system. Such measures may corroborate opportunities that Brazil must follow for more effectiveness and efficiency in the solution of its social, economic, and environmental problems, as well as being the world propellant of human development.