

Letter to the Editor

Road rage behaviour and experiences of taxi drivers in Islamabad and Rawalpindi, Pakistan

Madam, verbal abuse/threats or actual acts of physical harm by either a driver or passenger of one vehicle directed against the occupants of another vehicle or pedestrians entail road rage and could potentially lead to involvement in collisions, injuries, and death.¹⁻³ Road rage has also been associated with psychiatric illnesses in both the victims and the perpetrators.⁴ A previous study reported that the most common type of road rage experience of bus drivers was someone in another vehicle making rude gestures at them; reported by 156 (88.6%) of bus drivers in the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi in Pakistan.³ While another study reported 30% of university students having experienced being shouted, cursed or made rude gestures at while riding a vehicle, in the past three months; among a sample of 532 students.²

A cross-sectional survey with convenience sampling was conducted among taxi drivers in Islamabad and Rawalpindi at various frequently visited areas, popular destinations, and designated taxi stands; to understand their behaviour and experiences pertaining to road rage and its relationship to years of having driven taxi, from July to November 2008. An interviewer-administered, pre-tested, structured questionnaire with close-ended questions was used. Taxi drivers who had been driving for at least one year were interviewed by a trained interviewer, after obtaining verbal consent and ensuring confidentiality. Results were analyzed using STATA version 9, applying chi-square test.

Cumulatively, 496 taxi drivers were interviewed, however records on participation refusal were not kept but their number was less than 30. The mean age of taxi

Table: Road rage behavior and experiences of taxi drivers.

Behavior/Experience		Driven taxi for ≤ 10 years (n = 239)	Driven taxi for > 10 years (n = 257)
In the past three months, someone in another vehicle shouted or cursed at me, while I was driving.	Yes	192	187
	No	47	70
	P-Value	0.047	
In the past three months, I shouted or cursed at someone in another vehicle, while I was driving.	Yes	185	179
	No	54	78
	P-Value	0.051	
In the past three months, I made rude gestures at someone in another vehicle, while I was driving.	Yes	209	205
	No	30	52
	P-Value	0.021	
In the past three months, someone in another vehicle made rude gestures at me, while I was driving.	Yes	224	201
	No	25	56
	P-Value	<0.0005	
In the past three months someone in another vehicle had threatened to physically hurt me, while I was driving.	Yes	13	18
	No	226	239
	P-Value	0.472	
In the past three months, I had threatened to physically hurt someone in another vehicle, while I was driving.	Yes	13	33
	No	226	224
	P-Value	0.005	
In the past three months, someone in another vehicle had threatened to damage my vehicle, while I was driving.	Yes	82	44
	No	157	213
	P-Value	<0.0005	
In the past three months, I had threatened to damage someone's vehicle, while I was driving.	Yes	81	50
	No	158	207
	P-Value	<0.0005	
In the past three months, someone in another vehicle actually damaged your vehicle or actually hurt someone in your vehicle.	Yes	23	75
	No	216	182
	P-Value	<0.0005	
In the past three months, I actually damaged someone's vehicle or actually hurt some in another vehicle.	Yes	26	70
	No	213	187
	P-Value	<0.0005	

The P-values under 'taxi for ten years or less' column apply to pair-wise comparison between two groups based on years of having driven taxi.

drivers was 38.9 ± 8.1 years. On average, respondents had been driving a taxi for 12.5 ± 7.9 years. Educational status was described by respondents as 71 (14.3%) with no formal education, 141 (28.4%) with 2 to 5 years of education, 252 (50.8%) with 6 to 10 years of education, and the rest with 11-12 years of education. Table, lists the frequency of road rage behaviour and experiences of taxi drivers in the past three months disaggregated by ten or more years of having driven taxi, and statistically significant associations; using Pearson chi-square test of difference between two groups of drivers.

The most common types of reported road rage experience/behaviour in the past three months were, someone in another vehicle having made rude gestures, and respondents themselves having made rude gestures at someone in another vehicle while they were driving. Several statistically significant associations were found between taxi drives that had driven for ten years or less versus those drivers who had driven for more than ten years in terms of road rage experiences and behaviour. Taxi drivers who had driven for ten or less years had a mean age of 32.6 ± 4.2 years versus 44.8 ± 6.2 years for those who had driven for over ten years. Hence differences in the two groups are associated

with the age of taxi drives.

The most disturbing findings of this study were the fact that 432 (87.1%) taxi drivers replied affirmatively to smoking cigarettes on a regular basis, and 86 (17.3%) reported regular use of illicit drugs/alcohol. There is a need for nationally represented surveys to study road age in commercial vehicle drivers, and to quantify cigarette smoking and use of drugs, so as to determine the need for, and plan health education programmes targeting this group; and to improve road safety in Pakistan.

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