

# Lived Experiences and Impacts of Disabilities in Cambodia Following Road Crashes

Socheata Sann<sup>a</sup>, Narelle Haworth<sup>a</sup>, Julie King<sup>b</sup>, Mark King<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Centre for Accident Research and Road Safety-Queensland (CARRS-Q), Queensland University of Technology

<sup>b</sup> School of Public Health and Social Work, Queensland University of Technology

## Abstract

The study aimed to explore the impacts of disabilities following road crashes in Cambodia. Primary data collection was conducted via structured observations and in-depth interviews with the persons with disabilities as a result of a road crash and their families. They were asked about their perceptions of road crash characteristics and causes, experiences related to emergency responses and post-crash treatment, support on discharge and impacts on them and their families. The study illustrated the disability-poverty cycle and the need for interventions and a disability inclusive approach to road safety.

## Background

Road crashes and injuries have become a growing issue worldwide and disability has been recognised as a global public health issue. Persons with disabilities, especially in developing countries, experience more disadvantages in education, employment and health care (Ingstad & Eide, 2011; WHO, 2014). Additionally, the perspective of persons with disability about their lives has not been captured.

The main objective of this study was to identify and explore the self-reported impacts of disabilities following a road crash on the lived experiences of casualties and their families.

## Method

Primary data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews with 46 persons with disabilities (due to road crashes) and 31 family members, and 44 associated observations in seven provinces in Cambodia. Initially, preliminary semi-structured interviews were conducted with the persons with disabilities and their families to collect general information (name, family status, etc.), an overview of the road crash that had led to their disability and overall lived experience. Subsequent, in-depth interviews were arranged around six to nine months after the first stage. Continuous, iterative thematic analysis was conducted throughout the data collection. The information gathered from new participant built up previous information and contributed to successive data collection and analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

## Results

After their crashes, persons with disabilities experienced inadequate emergency response and insufficient post-crash treatment that might have increased the severity of their long term impairments and contributed to their disabilities. Impacts of disabilities on participants and their families included reductions in their sense of physical, psychological, economic and social well-being and limited inclusion due to societal barriers.

The study also illustrated the effect of road crashes on poorer communities. Poorer living conditions were observed in rural areas compared to urban areas among the persons with disabilities. The analyses also highlighted the unaffordability of safer transport modes for people in low-socio economic groups, which made them more vulnerable. Additionally, incidents of hit and run crashes,

unfair compensation, and a lack bargaining power were evidence of shortcomings in enforcement and the justice system.

There were varying perceptions about crash causation with a spectrum of beliefs in *karma*, blackspots and *reasey* as a cause of road crashes and disabilities. This demonstrated the important role of cultural and religious beliefs among some participants in their perceptions of road crash causes, which led to an acceptance that crashes could not be prevented.

The findings confirmed the disability poverty cycle. Families experienced decreased income and increasing family expenses and debt. Additionally, persons with disability, children or siblings frequently dropped out of school.

### **Conclusions**

The findings suggest that there are gaps in road crash prevention, long term impairment intervention, and disability inclusion. The experiences of the participants highlighted the lack of a social protection scheme, the insufficient implementation of current policies and the absence of relevant policy development. Additionally, this study illustrated the need for interventions and a disability inclusive approach to road safety.

### **References**

- Corbin, J., Strauss, A. (2008). Basics of Qualitative Research 3e (V. Knight, S. Connelly, L. Habib, K. Wiley, & G. Treadwell Eds.). United States of America: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Ingstad, B., Eide, A. H. (2011). Disability and Poverty: a global challenge Disability and Poverty: a Global Challenge. Great Britain: The Policy Press.
- WHO. (2014). Draft WHO Global Disability Action Plan 2014-2021: Better Health for all People with Disabilites. Retrieved from [http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf\\_files/EB134/B134\\_16-en.pdf?ua=1](http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB134/B134_16-en.pdf?ua=1)