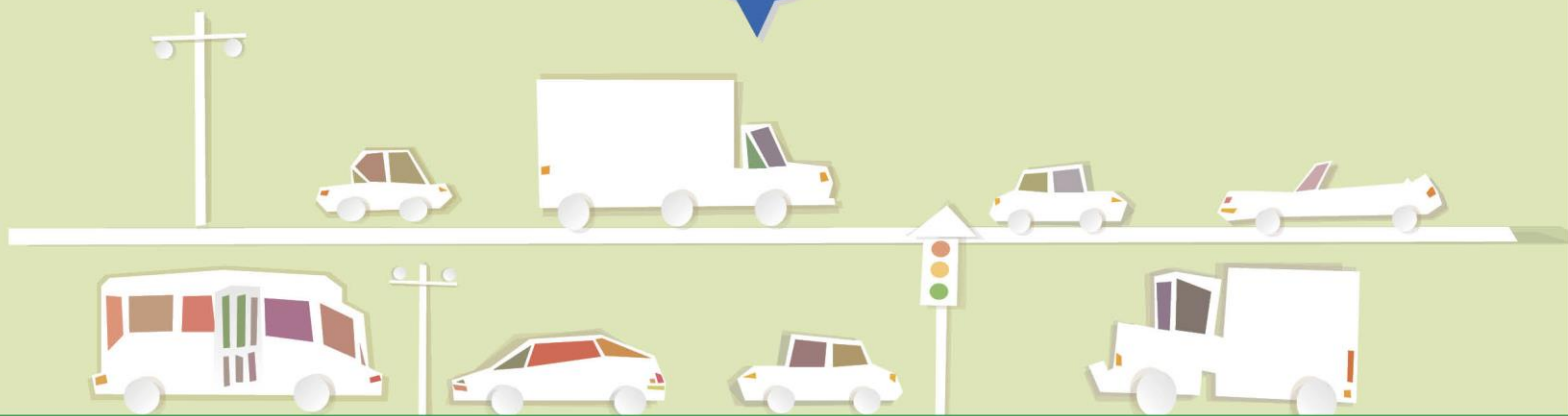


THEMATIC FILE ROAD SAFETY 10

IMPLICATIONS OF CRASHES FOR INJURED VICTIMS



Knowledge center
Road safety

Thematic File Road Safety 10 – Implications of crashes for injured victims (Summary)

Thematic File Road Safety 10 – Implications of crashes for injured victims (2017)

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This paper outlines – both exhaustively and comprehensively – the issues surrounding the consequences of road traffic accidents for injured victims, including the medical/functional, psychological and socio-economic effects.

The literature review which we produced for this report shows that the extent of the human consequences for the victims is indeed often very substantial. Above and beyond the sole medical aspects relating to injuries, the consequences of road traffic accidents are often long-lasting – or even permanent – and can relate to every aspect of human activity: functional (pain, fatigue, mobility, day to day activities,...), mental health (post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety,...), social and personal life, professional life (absenteeism, career change, ...) and economic and financial impact (loss of income,...). In many cases, the impact is not only on the victim but also on those around them; those close to them sometimes need to reorganise their own lives – private and/or professional – to deal with the injured victim. Further, for society as a whole, the consequences of road traffic accidents with physical injuries constitute a real scourge.

While studies generally concur on the extent of consequences of road traffic accidents at a human level, the trends observed for different problems and different difficulties can vary widely from one study to another depending on, *inter alia*, the type of methodology used, the type, location and the severity of injuries, the transport mode and several personal and environmental factors. In this respect, it has been observed that elderly people, women, people with other disorders predating the accident (comorbidity) and people at a lower socio-economic level are likely to suffer worse consequences from their accident.

In general, the studies show unanimously that more serious injuries have greater repercussions for the individual. However, certain more minor injuries, such as post-traumatic cervical injuries (whiplash) can also have major long-term consequences. Furthermore, as minor and moderate injuries are much more frequent than serious injuries, they represent a significant share of the overall burden of injury for the society as a whole.

Along with the literature review which aims to summarise the current state of knowledge on the subject, this paper also offers a particular emphasis on the situation in Belgium. Two databases of victims of injuries from road traffic accidents in Belgium (MyLAC and REKOVER) were analysed for this report and show results comparable to those generally observed in the scientific literature. The legislation and measures in force or planned in Belgium were also examined. Strictly speaking, there is no legislation specifically and directly concerning the ‘human’ consequences of road traffic accidents for injured victims. The legislation relates rather to the legal and judicial aspects which stem from the law on road accidents, such as attributing responsibility, assessing damages and legal remedies for losses. These aspects do however have a direct impact on other spheres, in particular on the psychological, medical and socio-economic consequences for those with injuries. Finally, this report also presents a whole series of existing, planned and contemplated measures and initiatives aim, among other things, to indemnify victims on the basis of their difficulties (health care, absence from work, etc.) and to improve the support and assistance they receive (e.g. victim support services).



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