

Area-wide traffic calming improves safety -- but will it work in low- and middle-income countries?

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Area-wide traffic calming schemes that discourage through-traffic from using residential roads are effective at reducing traffic-related injuries in high-income countries and may even reduce deaths. However, more research needs to be carried out to see whether these interventions will work in low- and middle-income countries, according to a Cochrane Systematic Review of the available evidence.

Each year, 1.23 million people die in road traffic accidents. Over the next decade, road deaths are expected to rise particularly sharply in low- and middle-income countries. Therefore, it is important to understand whether traffic calming measures, such as speed humps, mini-roundabouts and the creation of one-way streets, have any significant impact on traffic accidents and injuries.

The review included 22 controlled before-and-after studies that measured injuries and deaths before and after the introduction of traffic calming measures and compared to control areas with no traffic calming measures. All the trials were carried out in high-income countries, with the majority in Germany and the UK. Traffic calming schemes were effective at reducing traffic-related injury. Deaths were also reduced, although the results were not statistically significant. According to the researchers, more controlled studies are needed.

"Traffic calming schemes appear to be a promising way of reducing

traffic injuries and deaths, although further rigorous evaluation is required to prove this beyond doubt," says lead researcher, Frances Bunn. "Research is particularly lacking in low- and middle-income countries, where the situation can only be expected to get worse."

"Considering the expected rise in traffic deaths over the next few years, the epidemic of road traffic deaths and injuries is really just beginning and it is imperative for [global health](#) that we find effective strategies for dealing with it."

Source: Wiley ([news](#) : [web](#))

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