

Over 270,000 pedestrians killed each year

May 2 2013

More than 270,000 pedestrians are killed on the world's roads each year, the World Health Organisation said Thursday, slamming decades of neglect in favour of vehicle transportation.

The UN health agency underlined that pedestrian victims make up 22 percent of the total 1.24 million people killed annually in [road traffic accidents](#) around the globe.

"More than 5,000 pedestrians are killed on the world's roads each week. This is because their needs have been neglected for decades, often in favour of motorised transport," said Etienne Krug, head of the WHO's injury prevention department.

"We need to rethink the way we organise our transport systems to make walking safe and save pedestrian lives," he said in a statement.

Pedestrians are among the most vulnerable road users, the WHO said.

It pointed to studies showing that males—whether children or adults—make up a high proportion of pedestrian deaths and injuries.

In developed countries, older pedestrians are more at risk, while in low-income and middle-income countries, children and young adults are often affected.

The proportion of pedestrians killed in relation to other road users is highest in Africa, at 38 percent, and lowest in Southeast Asia, where the

figure is 12 percent.

"We are all [pedestrians](#), and governments should put in place measures to better protect all of us," said Oleg Chestnov, head of the WHO's non-communicable diseases and mental health division.

"This will not only save lives, but create the conditions needed to make walking safe. When roads are safe, people will walk more, and this in turn will improve health and protect the environment," he added.

The WHO recommends a mix of enforcement, engineering and education measures to improve [pedestrian safety](#).

They include boosting laws against speeding, drinking and driving, and [mobile phone use](#) at the wheel, as well as providing [pavements](#), underpasses and decent road lighting, better public transport and improved design with soft vehicle fronts that reduce impact damage.

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