

Mapping global road risk

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(Medical Xpress)—The next time you go to Africa or the Middle East,

you may want to stay off the roads.

A dozen of the world's countries with the highest traffic fatality rates per 100,000 population are part of the African continent, according to researchers at the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute. Another 10 of the top 25 nations with the worst road crash death rates are evenly split among the Middle East and Latin America.

The United States? We rank 97th out of the world's 193 countries.

When it comes to the greatest number of deaths from road crashes as a percentage of fatalities from all causes of death, several countries in the Middle East are at the top. The United Arab Emirates (16 percent) and Qatar (14 percent) are by far the worst, leading a total of 12 nations from that part of the world among the top 20 countries.

By comparison, the U.S. and Canada are both below 2 percent and several European nations are under 1 percent.

Using data from the World Health Organization, UMTRI researchers Michael Sivak and Brandon Schoettle compared fatality from road crashes with mortality from three leading causes of death worldwide: cancer, [heart disease](#) and stroke.

While global death rates per 100,000 population are higher from chronic health-related causes than from traffic accidents, the latter does claim more victims in some countries, especially in developing nations. For example, the African nation of Namibia has the highest annual road traffic fatality rate in the world (45 deaths per 100,000 population), but it ranks ahead of only three countries with the lowest mortality rates for cancer (29 deaths per 100,000 population).

The worldwide [death rates](#) per 100,000 population for each of the four

causes in the U-M study are: 18 from road crashes, 113 from cancer, 108 from heart disease and 91 from stroke. The U.S. rates are 14, 189, 143 and 47, respectively. Canada has very similar rates to the U.S. when it comes to cancer, heart disease and stroke, but a much better [fatality](#) rate from [road crashes](#)—eight per 100,000 population.

Overall, traffic deaths account for about 2 percent of all fatalities from all causes worldwide.

"The results of this study indicate that road safety is a greatly underappreciated component of public health in many parts of the world," Sivak said.

More information: The complete study is available online: [deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstre ... 02989.pdf?sequence=1](https://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/handle/2026.1/167029/1/02989.pdf?sequence=1)

Provided by University of Michigan

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