

# Road safety to 2020 and beyond: some upcoming challenges

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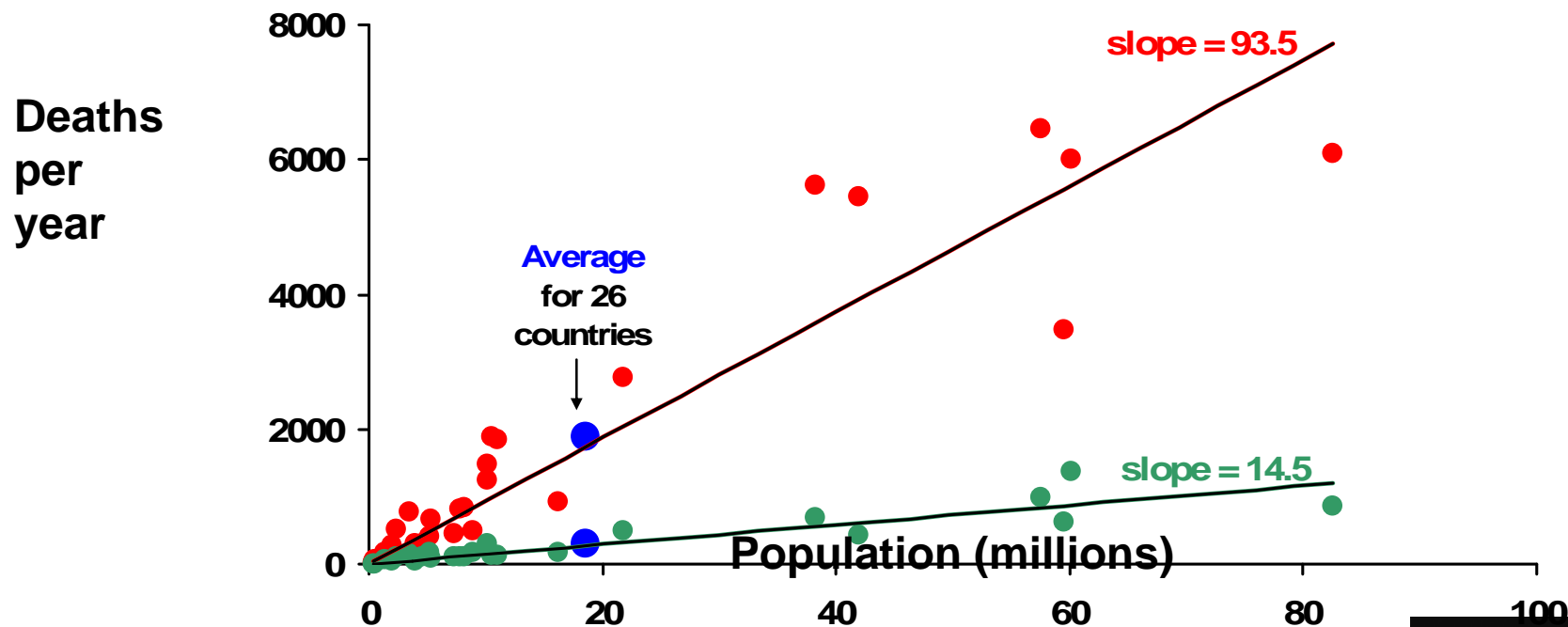


**UCL**

# Disproportionate risk on the roads

- People in Britain under 75 years of age spend about one hour a day using the roads
  - and about 2800 of them are killed on the roads each year
- And in the 15 waking hours a day they spend elsewhere, about 5600 of them die as a result of accidents
- So the **risk of death per hour while using the roads is about 7.5 times the risk per hour in the rest of everyday life in Great Britain**
- The ratio is about 4.8 even when people aged 75 or over (many of whom die in falls) are included

# Numbers killed per year **on the roads** and **in a similar time in the rest of everyday life** in 26 European countries 2002-2004



# Levels of tolerance of harmful behaviour

- Misuse of guns **low**
- Spreading disease **low**
- Crime against persons or property **low**
- Misuse of substances **variable**
- Misuse of motor vehicles **high**

# The scandal of tolerance

- No area of active life can be free of risk
- But we should not tolerate risk that is disproportionate and affordably removable in any unavoidable part of everyday life
- Using the roads is an unavoidable part of everyday life – and much of the disproportionate risk on the roads is removable in ways we can afford
- To get to grips with risk on the roads in new ways we need to address the scandal of public and political tolerance of current levels of risk

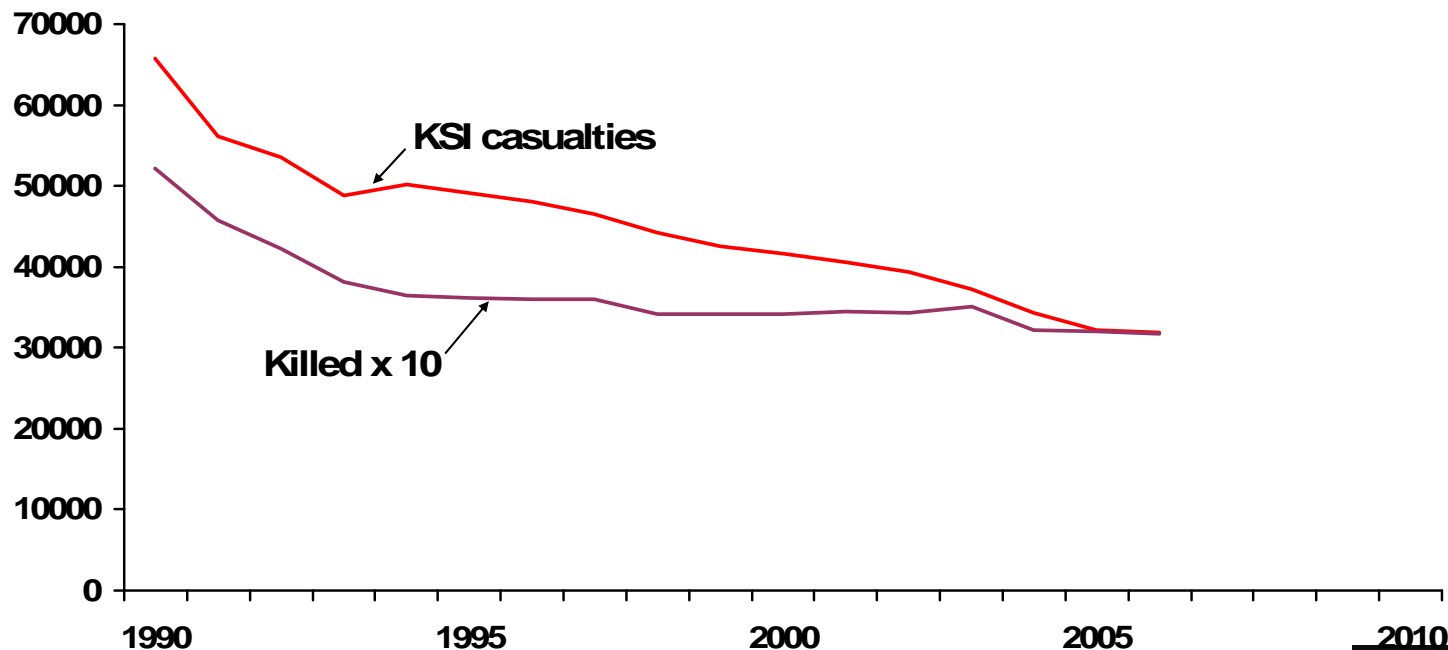
# **Meeting the challenge to achieve new levels of public awareness and political commitment**

**is the key to tackling the more specific challenges of the next decade and beyond  
in maintaining and accelerating the rate of reduction in death and injury on the roads that leading countries are achieving in this decade –  
and extending this reduction to other countries in every continent**

# Some more specific challenges

- Persistence of deaths among car users
- Helping young drivers towards maturity
- Getting the unbelted to belt up
- Drink driving – the next steps
- Opening the way to voluntary ISA
- The changing mix of cars
- Motorcycling
- Encouraging active travel at lower risk
- **Keeping on with road safety engineering**

## Changes in **number killed or seriously injured** and **number killed** - Great Britain 1990-2006





# Persistence of car user deaths

## In Great Britain

- the age group 16-30 (~25% of adult life) includes 40% of male car driver deaths, 60% of male car passenger deaths and 30% of female car user deaths
- these are concentrated in leisure hours
- 2/3 happen in accidents in which a driver loses control – mainly through excessive speed, lack of judgement or carelessness

# Helping young drivers towards maturity

- Learning to drive is part of growing up – it cannot be risk-free
- Young people need help to become mature drivers with less risk to themselves and to others –  
and with respect for traffic law
- Systematic reform of the way people learn and maintain safe driving skills is envisaged in Britain

# Getting the unbelted to belt up

- **Belt-wearing in Britain is currently around 90%**
- **Yet 30% of car occupants killed are unbelted**
- **If belt-wearing halves the risk of death in a potentially fatal accident, this means that the risk of severe accident among the unbelted is 1.5 times that among the belted**

# Drink driving – the next steps

- **The risks of driving after drinking need to be taught to each new cohort of drivers and kept fresh in the minds of all drivers**
- **The UK is the only large EU country with a legal blood alcohol limit over 50mg/100ml**
- **Lowering the limit to 50 with fresh public information and more enforcement could get deaths in drink-driving accidents moving downward again here – and encourage fresh efforts elsewhere**

# Opening the way to voluntary ISA

- Many who have driven with intelligent speed adaptation like it
- The market could deliver it to those who want it ahead of any legislation –  
provided that reliably updated digital maps of speed limits are assured
- Some European countries are assuring this for their roads – London is doing so here and others should follow

# The changing mix of cars

- **Injury in collisions between light and heavy cars is more severe than in collisions between equally heavy cars**
- **More car-buyers have been choosing the lightest or the heaviest types of car**
- **In Britain this has increased car user deaths by about 1% over 6 years**
- **Downsizing of the car fleet needs to be managed for the safety of users and pedestrians**

# Motorcycling

- **Motorcycles offer people more mobility for less cash, fuel and roadspace –  
but with an order of magnitude higher risk of death or severely disabling injury**
- **Balancing these gains and losses calls for more understanding of differences between utilitarian and risk-seeking motorcycling –  
and of the choice to motorcycle**

# Encouraging active travel safely

**means creating attractive safe routes for walking and cycling to reachable destinations or to and from public transport**

**which means reshaping public spaces, streets, country lanes and parts of the main road network – and rethinking priorities for maintenance of surface condition**



# Reshaping for sustainable safety

Reshaping for safer walking and cycling is part of working towards a road and traffic system that is

**Functional**

**Homogeneous**

**Predictable**

**and**

**Forgiving**

and to which users are encouraged, and where necessary required, to adapt their behaviour

# Road safety engineering

is being described in Europe in terms of

- safety impact assessment of major road construction or alteration
  - safety audit of all road schemes
  - management of high risk sites, road sections and areas by local safety schemes
  - safety inspection of all parts of the road network
- and countries not yet doing all of these are likely to be required to do them

# Keeping on with local road safety engineering schemes

- **Yes, some countries have treated most of the backlog of very high-risk sites**
- **But the range of techniques for small-scale road safety engineering is growing and rates of return remain high**
- **So we are still under investing in it here – and the same is probably true elsewhere**
- **Putting this right needs money and skills**

# Beyond 2010

A pragmatic vision for road safety is

*to reduce the risk of death per hour spent using the roads to the average per hour spent in other everyday activities*

To come within a factor of 2 of this requires in Britain about two more halvings in deaths per year on the roads from the likely number in 2010 – and at least that in most other countries

# Engaging new stakeholders

means seeing safer road use as part **not only of safe access and mobility** but also of

- improved public health through greater physical activity in travel
- greater liveability in our surroundings through more welcoming local roads
- greater social inclusion through safe neighbourhoods for all
- reduced use of fossil fuels

**These are the areas of public concern  
and policy where we should look for  
new allies**

**in confronting the scandal of tolerance  
of death and injury on the roads  
and securing more resources for  
engineering safer roads**

