Trend and Implication of Helmet Use Six and Twelve Months After Helmet Regulation in Central Vietnam

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Abstract

In Vietnam, road traffic accidents are a serious problem. In order to decrease road traffic accident cases, helmet-wearing was made compulsory for riders and passengers driving on all roads from December 2007.

Objectives

Assess helmet-wearing rates six and twelve months after the regulation in three central provinces of Vietnam (Binhduong, Yenbai, Danang).

Method

Road side observations were made on different classes of road using five sites in each province. Two researchers observed helmet use, one observing riders, the other passengers. Observations were made on one weekday and one weekend (non-consecutive), 4 times per day: 7:00-9:00, 10:00-12:00, 16:00-18:00 and 19:00-21:00. Helmet-wearing and incorrect use (helmet strap not fastened) were recorded for riders and passengers.

Results

Helmet-wearing was higher after enforcing the regulation. However, comparing the six and 12 month observations helmet-wearing among riders decreased from 93.9% (June) to 88.1% (December) in Yenbai; increased from 94.6% to 96.9% in Binhduong and leveled off 99.7% in Danang. Helmet-wearing among passengers fell from 90.5% to 78.5% in Yenbai; from 98.8% to 90.2% in Danang and rose from 88.7% to 94.6% in Binhduong. In Yenbai and Danang, helmet-wearing among riders and passengers fell at the four observation times. Incorrect wearing among riders and passengers increased in three provinces.

Conclusion

The regulation had a positive impact on helmet-wearing in three provinces. However, incorrect use is rising in riders and passengers. This trend and the reasons behind it are likely to be significant for Vietnam and other countries introducing such regulation. Possible causes and policy implications of this trend will be explored for likely remedies.