

Letter to the Editor**THE BAN OF COMMERCIAL MOTORCYCLE RIDERS: AN EFFECTIVE STRATEGY IN REDUCING THE RATE OF ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS IN NIGERIA****Daha Garba Muhammad^{1*}**¹Department of Physiotherapy, Abubakar Tafawa Belewa University Teaching Hospital, Bauchi, Nigeria.

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Keywords: Motorcycle, Accidents, Strategy, Emergency.**Cite this article:** Muhammad DG. The ban of commercial motorcycle riders: an effective strategy in reducing the rate of road traffic accidents in Nigeria. *Yen Med J.* 2020;2(4):5 – 6.**Dear Editor,**

Okada or Achaba is the use of motorcycles for hiring and commercial purposes.¹ The history of Okada in Nigeria can be traced back to late 1980s and early 1990s during the economic downturn,¹ and its resulting consequences such as unemployment.² Lack of good public transport and bad roads, high speed and ability to manoeuvre in a traffic jam with ease are factors that increase the patronage of Okada riders.²

Okada related accident is now recognized as a public health problem due to the increasing rate of its occurrence in Nigeria.³ The rate of death is 30 times more in Okada drivers than in other vehicle drivers.⁴ This may be due to the fact that Okada riders have less or even no regard for road traffic regulations and are not well skilled in riding as suggested by Osinowo et al.³

In 2016, motorcycle-related accidents accounted for 20 per cent of accidents nationwide and dropped down to 19 percent in 2017 following the ban of Okada in some states.⁵ Though, it was argued that banning of Okada is not an economic or social wise decision,³ but was shown to have reduced mortality rate.^{5,6} A reduction of Okada riders' accident in Lagos from nineteen in January 2020 to one between February 1st and 20th was reported after the ban.⁶ Premium times⁷ in an interview with a surgeon and head of emergency department of national orthopedic hospital, Igbobi reported a significant reduction in Okada

related accident in Lagos by two months after the ban of okada riders. The ban was partially enforced in August, that led to lower rate of okada-related accident in September and October compared to between June and August. One hundred and thirty cases were reported in the former and 183 cases were recorded in the later. The study further stated that, banning of okada riding could be the reason for lesser cases reported since other factors remained constant.

Similarly, in Kano, Nigeria, the total number of road traffic accidents recorded from October 1, 2009 to September 31, 2010 was 37260 and motorcycle related accident accounted for 46.7% of these accidents. The study further stated that, in every 24hrs an average of 48 motorcycle related accidents are recorded, meaning in every hour of a day at least two motorcycle related accident are recorded.⁸ In a study conducted in the same place (Kano) after the ban of the commercial motorcycle riders, 87.7% reduction in the accident rate was reported (AD Jafar, Unpublished data. 2019).

Furthermore, a total of 1603 patients were said to have been involved in a road traffic accident in a two year retrospective study in Jos, North-Central region in Nigeria, of which 30.3% were caused by motorcycle related accident.⁹ Though, there was no study conducted after the ban in the area, another study elsewhere, by Emiogun et al⁶ in Lagos showed reduction in number of deaths from 75% to 25% after the ban.

Therefore, it can be concluded that, ban of commercial motorcycle riders can be effective in reducing the rate of road traffic accidents in Nigeria.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Authors have none to declare.

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