

INLAND TRANSPORT
COMMITTEE



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International seminar on
Aggressive behaviour on the road
(Geneva, Switzerland, 5 April 2004)
Part 1 - Causes, effects and
consequences of aggressiveness on
the road

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ENGLISH
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Victims of aggressiveness on the road

**Speaker: Mr. Marcel Haegi, President of the European Federation
of Victims of the Road (FEVR)**

Every year, road accidents brutally terminate the lives of more than a million persons throughout the world. Three times as many remain seriously disabled for the rest of their lives. Such accidents are often due to aggressive or careless driving or to alcohol. In economic terms, each car produces on average as much human and material damage as it costs to manufacture it.

Two types of action could enable such tragedies to be minimized:

1. Genuine prevention involving all road safety actors and using the methods and technologies currently available on the market.
2. First-aid for immediate injuries, quality emergency medical assistance, hospital follow-up and effective rehabilitation.

Apart from the physical and mental distress and the death of the victims, the grief and suffering of the survivors often lead to a breakdown in the quality of life of the five million families affected every year. Far from diminishing in the course of time, the mental suffering of the families worsens and in its turn sometimes generates serious psychosomatic illnesses. (1)

The majority of existing legal systems focus on the offender. Victims are thus often marginalized and may even be subjected subsequently to further victimization by the legal system itself, which uses the victim as evidence rather than as a person with needs and rights to

be protected. The United Nations General Assembly reacted against this situation in resolution 40/34 (1985) when it established a “Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power”.

Much remains to be done, however. In many countries the victims are poorly informed and often treated without compassion and without dignity, little heeded in the courts and inadequately compensated, often after years of waiting.

Better assistance to road traffic victims is a duty the State should fulfil, since the small minority of persons who receive moral, psychological or legal assistance often only obtain it from voluntary service organizations.

The diagrams appearing in the annex have been taken from the FEVR survey, undertaken with the support of the European Commission. (1)

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Reinforcement or establishment of advice and assistance Centres, where victims and/or their families can find, in addition to immediate information, the moral, legal and social assistance they need.
2. Reassessment of compensation to bring it into line with all the types of damage experienced by the victims (2), particularly head injuries. It should be ensured that funeral expenses, medical expenses and loss of income are immediately taken into account.
3. Re-setting of the balance in systems of criminal procedures so as to ensure full equality between the rights (2) of the victims and/or their family members and the rights guaranteed to the accused or the person who caused the accident.

References

(1) “Impact of road death and injury - Research into the principle cause of the decline in quality and living standards suffered by road crash victims and victim families - Proposals for improvements” (1997) ISBN 2-940183-00-7, FEVR P.O. Box 2080, CH-1211 Geneva 2 Dépôt, Switzerland.

(2) United Nations General Assembly resolution 40/34 (New York 1985) “Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power”.

The diagrams below were taken from the FEVR survey undertaken with the support of the European Commission.

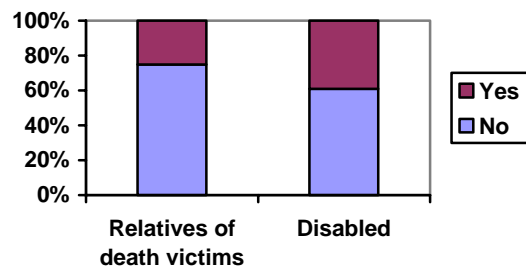
Annex

(English only)

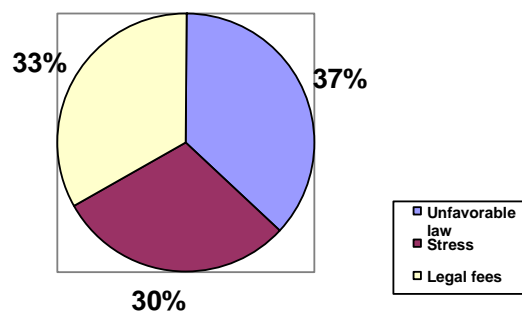
Informed about helping organisations

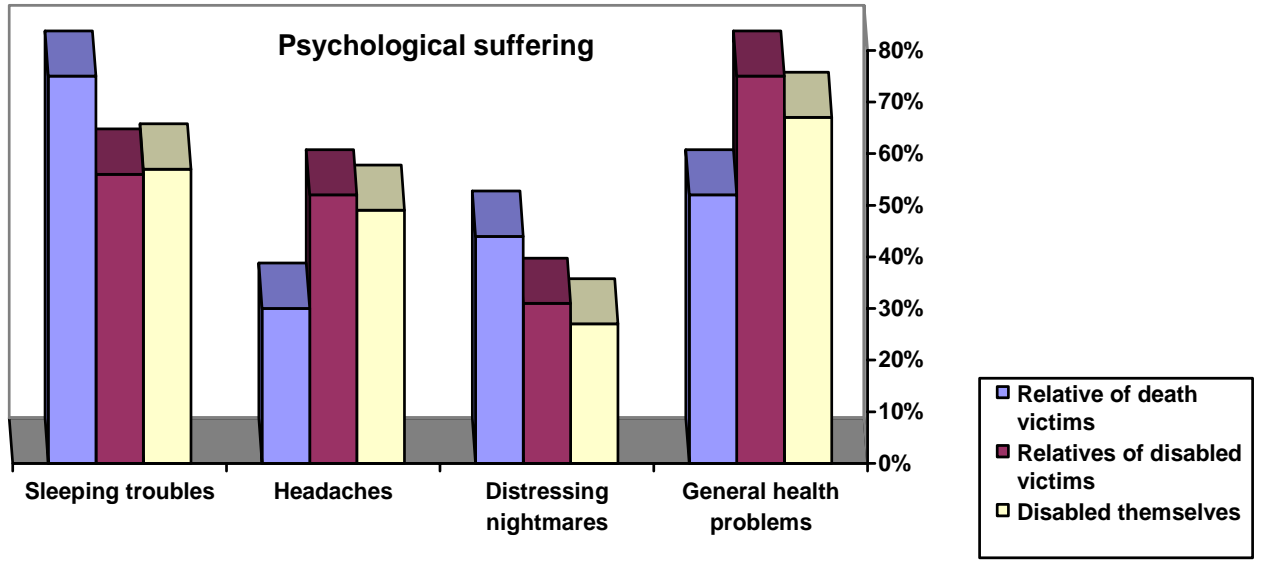


Charges fair

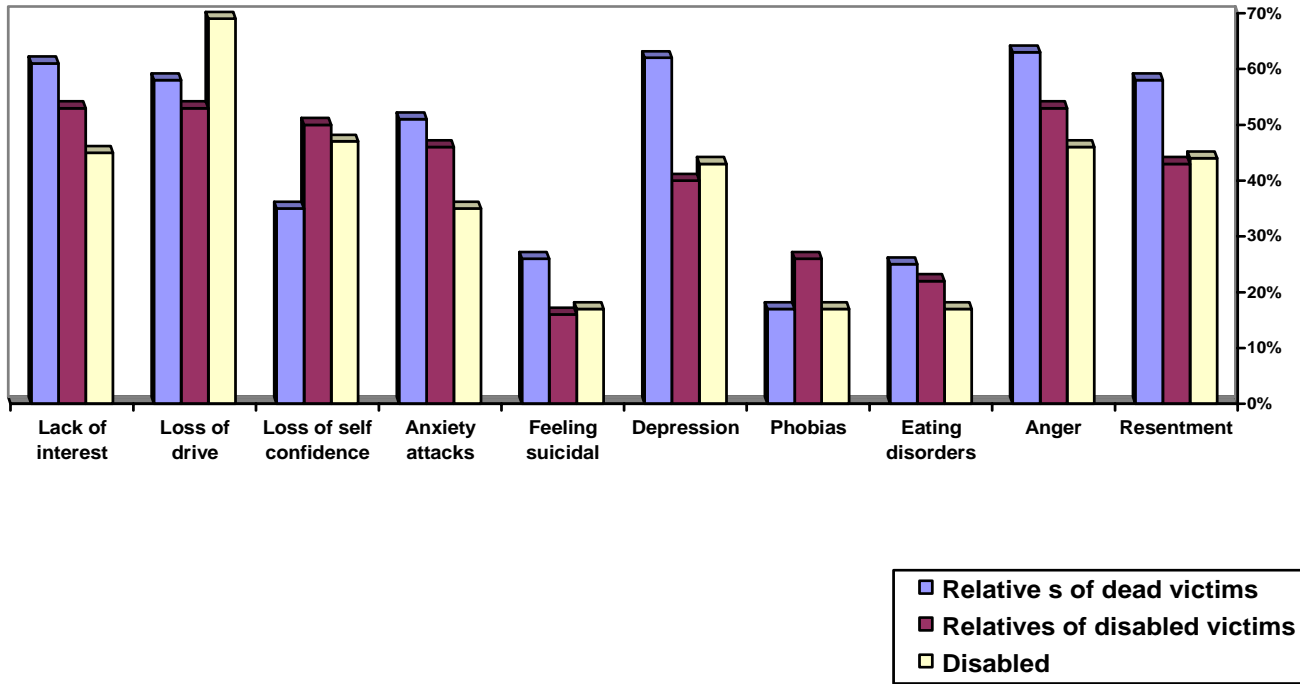


Not gone to Court because





Psychological suffering



Most helpful psychological aid

