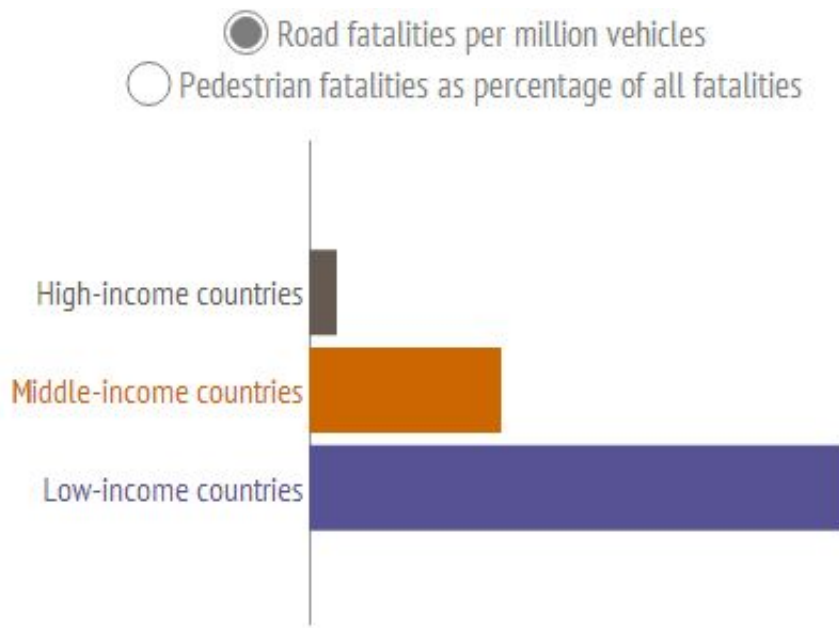


# Richer countries have safer roads

October 30 2013

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Wealthier nations, whose residents own a majority of the world's vehicles, have the lowest roadway fatality rates, say University of Michigan researchers.

In a new study on [road safety](#) in 170 countries, Michael Sivak and Brandon Schoettle of the U-M Transportation Research Institute found that the average fatality rate per million vehicles is 313 in high-income countries, 2,165 in middle-income countries and 6,040 in low-income countries.

Further, the average percentage of pedestrian deaths out of all roadway fatalities is lower in high-income nations (21 percent) compared with middle-income (31 percent) and low-income (35 percent) countries.

Using data from the World Health Organization on countries with populations of at least 100,000, Sivak and Schoettle examined differences in road safety based on gross national income per person: high (more than \$12,275), middle (\$1,006 to \$12,275) and low (less than \$1,006).

"The goal was to identify relevant commonalities that may assist in the creation of road-safety policies common to countries at a similar level of development," Sivak said.

The researchers also found income-level effects for 31 aspects related to institutional framework, safer roads and mobility, safer vehicles, safer road users and post-crash care.

According to the results, low-income countries are less likely to have national road-safety strategies; standard vehicle regulations; laws on the installation of safety belts, airbags and electronic stability controls; laws on the use of safety belts, child restraints, motorcycle helmets and mobile phones; strict driver penalty systems; effective drunk driving enforcement measures; universal emergency access phone numbers; and policies to promote walking, cycling and public transport.

Interestingly, maximum speed limits on rural roads and near schools tend to be lower in low-income countries, but the effectiveness of speed-limit enforcement is higher in high-income [countries](#).

Provided by University of Michigan

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