DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.33846/hn41103 http://heanoti.com/index.php/hn



URL of this article: http://heanoti.com/index.php/hn/article/view/hn41103

Life After Surviving Vehicular Accident: A Phenomenological Inquiry

Edmelyn B. Cacayan¹, Shayne R. Babaran², Romella M. Tuppal^{3(CA)}

¹Dean, Isabela State University, College of Nursing, Philippines

²Nursing Graduate, Isabela State University, College of Nursing, Echague, Isabela, Philippines

^{3(CA)}Faculty, Isabela State University, College of Nursing, Echague, Isabela, Philippines;

allemorlapput@gmail.com (Corresponding Author)

ABSTRACT

Worldwide, one of the leading causes of death and injuries are motor vehicle accidents. This study was conducted to explore motor vehicle accident victims' experiences after vehicular accident in an attempt to further understand the phenomenon. It is important to know the effects of the accident to the life of survivors in order to make a specific intervention to their specific needs. A qualitative phenomenological design is used, using semi-structured, in depth face to face interviews to elicit accounts of vehicular accident survivors. Findings revealed that driving under influence of alcohol, over speeding, slippery road, and first time driving are some of the causes of accident. Five of the respondents had experienced disturbing thoughts, and some of them had dreams of the accident were happening again. Six of the respondents were afraid that it will happen again when something or someone reminded them of the accident or when seeing the place where they experienced the accident. The result of this study will help and assist health professionals in developing a plan of care to victims of vehicular accidents regardless of severity to have psychological assistance to avoid future problems such as recurrent thoughts, sleep disturbances and others.

Keyword: vehicular accident; victim

INTRODUCTION

Motor vehicle accidents (MVAs) are one of the most frequent kinds of trauma experienced in the industrialized world. They are among the leading causes of death in several countries and for a large number of survivors cause permanent injuries of varying seriousness. (1) Some injuries don't seem to be directly apparent once an accident occur. However, in spite of when an injury first appears, it will have a semipermanent effect. One in all the areas within which automotive accident injuries occurred can generally be long lasting is those concerning psychological or emotional trauma.

However, Seva⁽²⁾ conducted a study regarding motorcycle accidents in the Philippines considering personal and environmental factors that have been previously accomplished in 2012 where the variables considered by them for study were age, lighting conditions, traffic movement, road character, junction type, day, surface conditions, and driving behaviour. Motor vehicle crashes are one in all the leading causes of death within the U.S.I over 2.3 million adult drivers and passengers were treated in emergency departments because the results of being scraped in motorized vehicle crashes in 2009. The economic impact is additionally notable: the life costs of crash-related deaths and injuries among drivers and passengers were \$70 billion in 2005⁽³⁾.

The mental and emotional injuries once an automobile accident happened, it'll embody mental anguish, fear, shock, random episodes of crying, emotional distress, sleep disturbances, anger, humiliation, anxiety, embarrassment, lack of energy, sexual dysfunction and mood swings. Studies indicate that simple fraction of these people concerned in an exceedingly nonlethal accident still have the above-named symptoms of emotional trauma a year when the accident together with post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and phobias. Recovering in the long-run from emotional and mental injuries after an automobile accident ought to be calculated into the pain and suffering damages. (4)

Philippine National Police reported that about 15,000 traffic accidents in 2006 that means that there are on the average of forty-one traffic accidents per day. These accidents lead to 674 fatalities, 3,767 injuries and 10,623 instances of property damage. The report over that almost all traffic accidents are caused principally by driver error. In 2006 for example, 4,182 (27%) of automobile accidents were caused by driver error. the opposite listed causes of traffic crashes enclosed vehicle mechanical defects (15%), rushing (13%). Additionally, traffic accidents caused telephone use whereas driving pictured the very best increase among the causes of traffic accidents.⁽⁵⁾

Hospital statistics showed that vehicular accidents January to August 2013 admitted at Southern Isabela General Hospital, Santiago City, Isabela the total number of vehicular accidents is 85 (26.16%), 72 are males and 13 are females. The mortality rates of vehicular accidents are a total of 14 (16.72%), 14 are males and 0 female. The impact of accidents can inevitably compromise the victim's quality and experience of life. Thus, this study aims to unravel the life after surviving vehicular accident which is described by the individuals who have been survived in an accident. This important health issue can able to increase concerns with death and injuries of the individuals which particularly arises in the Philippines. In relevancy, Hauque⁽⁶⁾ performed an in depth study in 2010 that accidents and severity crashes involving motorcycles and vehicles may be reticulate to the study. The vital objective of their study was to judge which activity factors influence the crash risk and to spot the foremost vulnerable cluster of motorcyclists.

METHODS

A qualitative phenomenological design was used, using semi-structured, in depth face to face interviews to elicit accounts of vehicular accident survivors. All nursing students and faculty members of Isabela State University-Echague Campus College of Nursing who experienced vehicular accidents were the respondents of the study. The data gathering instrument used in this study was an interview. Respondents conduct an indepth interview to elicit accounts of vehicular survivors. The responses of the respondents were grouped depending on the relatedness of their answers.

This research study was conducted at Isabela State University – Echague Campus; College of Nursing. First, the researcher conducted a pre-survey to determine the number of respondents of the study. After knowing the number of the respondents they were informed about the purpose, objectives, significance, risk-benefits, procedure of the study and their confidentiality. The participant also signed an informed consent.

The researcher made an interview guide that was used during the face to face interview to elicit accounts of experiences of vehicular accidents survivor. After creating an interview guide in this study, the researcher collected the data by interviewing each participant individually. The researcher interviewed the respondents in a familiar, comfortable setting made them at ease and allowed them to act in a natural manner and to be more open. All interviews were recorded and written by the researcher. After collecting all data, the researcher analyzed the data and made an interpretation regarding the findings of the researcher.

RESULTS

Respondent 1

Jose, 30 years old, single, third year male student of the College of Nursing.

- He met a vehicular accident last September 8, 2005 followed by July 17, 2006 and the last was December 18, 2009 because he was driving a single motorcycle while under the influence of an alcohol.
- He acquired scars in his scalp and in between his eyes going to his eyebrow. He had also bruises on his left cheek. He was also even able to bit his tongue and his doctor that time did the stitching: his jaw and gums were being anesthetized. He cannot chew his foods so he was on soft diet. He could not open his mouth well.
- He was disturbed with scars on his face and that reminded him of the accident. He was drunk during that time so he could not really remember what happened. There were times that he had the feeling that the accident could happen again. When he recovered, he was very careful driving again. From those accidents that he encountered he is thankful that he is still alive. He promised himself that he'll never drive again when he is under the influence of alcohol.
- He was disturbed with scars on his face and that reminded him of the accident. He was drunk during that time so he could not really remember what happened. There were times that he had the feeling that the accident could happen again. When he recovered, he was very careful driving again. From those accidents that he encountered he is thankful that he is still alive. He promised himself that he'll never drive again when he is under the influence of alcohol.
- He misses the way he looks before compared now that he has scars on his face that keeps on reminding him with what happened during the accidents that he was under the influence of alcohol.
- The accident causes no effect on his activities of daily living because he can still do whatever he wants.
- He was the one who financed all his expenses. He spent more than fifty thousand pesos during his first hospitalization.
- He became closer to God and considered the incident as a miracle. Once, he had the goose bumps when he
 noticed the cross pendant of his earring was lost and that thing reminds him always of what happened.
- During his stay in the hospital, he always followed what the health care team instructed him to do.
- Because of the trauma on his jaw and gums he could not talk so his means of communicating with the people
 was through writing it in a sheet of paper for them to know what he felt and what he wanted.

He thinks that his family who supported him was the one who helped him cope up. He ate nutritious foods and watched television for him not to get bored. He had hard time to cope up when he had to think about it but through his family support, it was easier for him to recover. He was fully recovered after almost 2 months.

Respondent 2

Gardo, 19 years old, single, third year male student of the College of Nursing.

- He met a vehicular accident last May 21, 2009 via motorcycle due to his friend who was driving under the influence of liquor.
- He had fractures and was treated for three (3) months. He had fracture on his right foot and he experienced difficulty in walking. Aside from that, he couldn't do his daily activities. He found difficulty taking a bath. He was also very careful and so conscious with his movements.
- According to him, he doesn't experience any disturbing thoughts, dreams, or images regarding the accident. Every time he rides on a motorcycle, he has the feeling that the accident might happen again when the driver overtakes to any vehicle. He doesn't feel anything when someone reminds him about the accident. He said that while driving, he avoids overtaking a vehicle.
- His relative abroad financed his expenses from hospitalization to recovery. His interaction to his family didn't change at all.
- According to him, his faith to God had been strengthen and so thankful. He had fully recovered the fourth (4) month after the accident. He easily coped up through the support of his friends, family, teachers and girlfriends. He did some simple exercises like walking with the use of crutches and by slowly moving his leg. He also listened to music and watched television.

Respondent 3

Oscar, 23 years old, single, fourth year male student of the College of Nursing.

- He met an accident last October year 2013 via single motorcycle due to drunk driving and slippery road.
- He had bruises and wound on his right leg.
- He still experience disturbing dreams about slippery road. He is so afraid when somebody reminds him of the accident and he feels like it will happen again. He is now very careful in driving and avoids driving fast.
- His cousins financed his expenses and they were the ones who helped him to cope up.
- In terms of his spiritual aspect, he claimed that his faith in God had strengthened more. His family did not know the accident he experienced. Only his cousin knew it. The good thing is that he learned something from that incident. He recovered almost after two weeks with the help of his cousins and other relatives who knew what happened. He coped up by sleeping and taking some rest.

Respondent 4

Bernadette, 21 years old, single, fourth year female student of the college of nursing.

- She met a vehicular accident last August year 2013 via single motorcycle because she wasn't able to step at the break.
- She had bruises and experienced lower back pains.
- After the accident, she dreamed that the accident was happening again and as if it was also happening to brother.
- She doesn't feel anything when someone reminds about the accident because she already accepted what happened. From that incident, she avoids driving and she fears on driving alone.
- She was financially supported by her family.
- She cooperated to what her family told her.
- She realized that life is too short that she has to be closer to God.
- She was able to cope up for 3 weeks by riding a motorcycle with someone assisting her. According to her,
 her family is the one who really helped her to recover. She coped up by eating what she wanted to eat,
 watched movies and walked with fiends.

Respondent 5

Ben, 24 years old, single, third year male student of the College of Nursing

- He met an accident last September 5, 2013 via single motorcycle because he was hit by the side mirror of an overtaking elf truck.
- He stated that he experienced fever and body aches for 2 days.
- According to him, he is still experiencing disturbing thoughts that it will happen again. As of now, he doesn't
 feel anything when someone reminds him about the accident. He doesn't avoid riding a motorcycle because
 he has no choice but to ride in his motorcycle going to school. He is always alert and very careful when
 driving.
- His mother financed his check-up and medication prescribed to him.
- His family members kept on advising him about driving from that time. He is open to whatever he feels to his family.

- He said that the accident is one of the many ways of God in order to make a turn and to change his life.
- He said that the accident is one of the many ways of God in order to make a turn and to change his life. He claimed that he recovered from the accident for two (2) weeks. He claimed that through prayers, family and friend's support helped him in coping up. He also included staying at home; getting some sleep and sometimes going out with friends are reasons that helped him coping up with the accident.

Respondent 6

Lloyd, 22 years old, single, fourth year male student of the College of Nursing

- He met a vehicular accident last August 3, 2013 via single motorcycle due to over speeding and slippery road.
- He had bruises on his forearm, cut on his head and lost 2 teeth. At first, he was much concern of what happened to the motor instead of him.
- He experiences disturbing memory especially when there are clouds and seems to rain. He is nervous every time there are vehicles overtaking him and thinks of it for a few nights.
- He blamed himself for his carelessness. He said that was the result of being a careless driver and was also asking how and why it happened. He was regretting his 2 teeth which were removed as a result of the accident. He is reminded of the accident when he is driving, seeing the place of accident and when seeing approaching rainy clouds. He claimed that he is now very careful in driving. He believed that when things are being cared for they will become your best friend, and if not: it will lead you to harm, danger or even death. He is ashamed to the people around him because he can't smile because of his lost teeth.
- His mother and younger brother financed his medicine expenses prescribed to him.
- He claimed that his faith to God became tighter and said that "with faith you can feel you are a son of God".
- He recovered for two weeks with the helped of family and friends. His board mates, family especially his
 older brother and uncle were the ones who supported him. His family kept telling him to be extra careful in
 driving. He coped up by staying at home, sleeping sometimes and going out with friends to unwind.

Respondent 7

Nathan, 18 years old, single, first year male student of the College of Nursing.

- He met an accident last October 2013 via single motorcycle because he was practicing to drive a motorcycle. He was over speeding then. Unfortunately, he fell down and were not able to control the break.
- He experienced bruises on his arms. He said that if his head hit the floor it may cause severe head injury. He was thankful because he had only bruises.
- He feels that the accident will happen again every time he drives a motorcycle and steps at the break. He feels embarrass when someone reminds him of the accident because at his age he still doesn't not know how to drive a motorcycle. He feels insecure to those who know how to drive cars or any vehicle.
- When driving, he is very careful and does not want to drive fast because it reminds him of the accident. The accident causes no effect on his daily activities because he only has bruises on arms.
- When he told his parents what happened, he had been scolded but he thought that they were just concern of
 his safety. When he told his parents what happened, he had been scolded but he thought that they were just
 concern of his safety.
- He believed that the thing helped him to cope up was trying or practicing to drive again with the help of his brother.
- He claimed that nothing changes his spirituality.
- He recovered for 1 week by practicing carefully again how to drive and with the help of his brother.

Respondent 8

Macky, 29 years old, single, male faculty member of the College of Nursing.

- He met a vehicular accident last January 27, 2013 via motorcycle when he hit a ball on the street.
- He had torn knee ligaments on his left knee. Until now he cannot walk straight, jog, run or play basketball.
- He undergoes physical therapy and reconstruction of torn ligaments. According to him his recovery is still about 90%.
- He doesn't experience disturbing memories, thoughts or dreams.
- He avoids driving a motorcycle because there are instances that he feels the accident will happen again while driving.
- He doesn't feel anything when someone reminds him of the accident.
- He is dependent to the people around him because he cannot perform his task well such as taking a bath, defecating, and changing his clothes. When taking a bath his knee should be wrap by a plastic so that it will not get wet.
- He finances his own expenses from hospitalization to surgery. According to him, you need to take care of the
 people around you.
- He became closer to God when the accident happened. After the accident, he realized how concern his parents are.
- He is trying to cope up by attending worship services and making himself busy to his chosen kind of business.

DISCUSSION

Seven of the participants are male. Six of them are students, one faculty member and the other one is a female nursing student. Their age ranges from I18 to 30 years old. All of the participants are single.

Driving under the influence of alcohol, over speeding, slippery road, and first time driving are the causes of vehicular accident of the respondents.

The physical injuries brought by the accident to the respondents are as follows; two of the respondents had fractures and seven of them had bruises and wounds in some parts of their bodies due to motorcycle imbalance. One lost his teeth. The others had left scars on face, bit his tongue and had serious damage on the nose. Some experienced fever and pain to some areas of their body which was injured. Some even had cast and use arm sling to immobilize the fracture. One of them used crutch to be able to walk. One has also a torn knee ligament that requires surgery and physical therapy. Some experienced difficulty in walking and cannot do their activities at home or things they wanted. The physical injury brought by the accident creates a big impact to one's physical state of being.

Five of the respondent had experienced disturbed thoughts and memories. Some of them dreamed about the accident. Six of the respondents are afraid that it will happen again especially when someone reminds them ot the accident or when they see the place where the accident took place. The accident takes a huge impact into their lives and sometimes they feel like it will happen again.

All of the respondents spent money for their treatment from hospitalizations until they were discharged and advised to continue medication. When you get involve in an accident you will surely spend a lot depending on the severity of the impact.

All of the respondents claimed that it strengthen their faith in God for they were given another chance to live. For them, it was one of the many ways of God to make them think and realize their wrong doings and that had changed their lives.

All of the respondents received support from their families and friends. These supports came in many forms including encouraging words, reminding about safety measures when leaving the house, assisting in activities, and providing necessary needs. According to some, the accident made their family bond stronger because they felt that they were loved and cared despite of that experience.

CONCLUSION

The researcher's findings provide an in depth understanding on the life experiences of vehicular accidents. Vehicular accidents create a big impact to the life of people who experienced it.

Based from the gathered data of the study the following were conducted: Majority of those who met vehicular accidents were males who were in adolescent stage and early adulthood. Major causes of accidents were drunk driving, over speeding, slippery road and first time driving. The recovery period of vehicular accidents ranged from two (2) weeks to sixteenth (16) weeks. Majority of vehicular accidents was through the use of a single motorcycle. Most of the respondents experienced disturbing thoughts and others dreamed that the accident was happening again. Majority of them fears when someone reminds them of what happened and when seeing the place where they experienced it.

In view of the findings and conclusions, the following were recommended: Avoid driving under the influence of alcohol. Avoid over speeding particularly on slippery road. Be aware or familiar with road signs. Get a driver's license. Listen closely to your parents and other people concern. Learn how to value life. Victims of vehicular accidents regardless of severity should seek psychological assistance to avoid future problems such as recurrent thoughts, sleep disturbances and others.

REFERENCES

- 1. WebMD. Impact of car accidents can belong lasting [Internet]. 2001. Available from: https://www.webmd.com/mental-health/news/20010820/impact-of-car-accidents-can-belong-lasting
- 2. Seva RR, Flores GMT, Gotohio MPT. Logit model of motorcycle accidents in the Philippines considering personal and environmental factors. International Journal for Traffic and Transport Engineering. 2012;3(2):173-184.
- 3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Motor vehicle safety [Internet]. Available from: https://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety
- 4. All about Car Accidents [Internet]. Available from: http://www.all-about-car-accidents.com/resources/auto-accident/caraccident-injuries/mental-emotional-injuries-from-car-wreck
- 5. Philippines car accidents [Internet]. Available from: http://www.car-accidents.com/countrycaraccidents/philippines-car-accidents.html
- 6. Haque M, Chin HC, Lim BCC. Effects of impulsive sensation seeking, aggression and risk-taking behaviors on the vulnerability of motorcyclists. Asian Transport Studies. 2010;1:165-180.