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Raising awareness about driving safety in an ambulance service

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ABSTRACT

Background: Worldwide ambulances are regularly involved in accidents as staff may not anticipate other drivers' actions, suffer from fatigue, or overestimate their driving privileges. An ambulance driving safety campaign started in June 2015 targeting some 935 registered HMCAS drivers. We aim to determine if our approach is effective in changing behaviours and beliefs, and reducing the number of accidents involving HMCAS vehicles.

Methods: This study was ethically approved as a quality improvement project and is still ongoing. The campaign made use of ambulance dashboard stickers and posters at ambulance stations' exits with respectively 4 and 6 key messages covering frequent issues resulting in collisions. An official circular also informed staff of the campaign. A month later a survey started to be distributed to staff.

Results: In two months, 189 anonymous online or paper questionnaires were fully completed. 69.2% of respondents had an HMCAS driving qualification (13.7% of qualified HMCAS drivers). On average, they reported having been involved in 0.90 accident requiring vehicle repair. Using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = very unsafe, 5 = very safe) respondents rated themselves as being safe drivers (4.24/5) and underestimated the monthly number of accidents with HMCAS vehicles to be 15.3 (Actual 21.2/month registered in 2014). Other data about self-reported driving behaviour and comparison between their perception about accidents and real data was analysed along with visibility and memorisation of the key messages.

Conclusions: Staff underestimated the number of accidents. Campaign material has been noticed by most staff except for the stickers inside the ambulances driving compartment which is not accessed by 23.2% of the respondents. Staff who saw the posters and stickers remembered nearly half of the information it contained. Although a significant decline in accidents occurrences was noticed in September, the impact of the campaign cannot yet be reliably assessed over this relatively short period of time.

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