

Janica M., Filimoniuk M., Szeremeta M

**THE CHARACTERISTICS OF FATAL ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENT VICTIMS
AUTOPSIED DURING THE PERIOD OF 1976-1985, 1991-2000 AND 2006-2015 IN THE
MATERIAL OF DEPARTMENT OF FORENSIC MEDICINE, MEDICAL UNIVERSITY OF
BIALYSTOK**

Scientific supervisor Szeremeta M. MD, PhD

*Human Anatomy Department, Medical University of Białystok
Department of Forensic Medicine, Medical University of Białystok*

Introduction: According to WHO road injuries are one of the ten most common causes of death. Apart from typical factors contributing to traffic accidents in last thirty years Poland and other Eastern European countries underwent dynamic political, economic and legal change. Those changes could affect the pattern of road traffic injuries.

Aim: The aim of the study was to compare the characteristics of fatal road traffic accident victims in three decades on the territory of the Podlaskie province: prior to political transformation, prior to accession to the European Union and after accession to European Union and to investigate risk factors for road traffic accidents.

Materials and methods: The material consisted of 11491 protocols of medico-legal autopsies carried out in the years 1976-1985, 1991-2000 and 2006-2015. To characterize the study group, sex, age, day of the week of the accident, month, site, cause of death, anatomical localization of injuries, blood alcohol concentration, time elapsed between the accident and death were evaluated and compared between three decades. To determine statistical significance Chi square Test was applied at significance level of 0.05.

Results: The highest number of fatalities was observed in the years 1991-2000, and the lowest in the years 1976-1985. Regardless of the year male casualties were in the majority. In every decade regardless of the gender young people (between 18 and 35 years old) represented the most abundant group. In the years 1976-1985 pedestrians dominated among the victims. Over time the number of casualties among car drivers and passengers increased, especially in the non-built-up areas. In the years 1976-1985 head traumas were the most frequent cause of death, while after 1991 multi-organ injuries became more pronounced.

Conclusions: The characteristics of fatal road traffic accident victims changed over the period of 30 years. However, the number of accidents is decreasing, when they occur the injuries tend to be more severe.