

ABSTRACT

The magnitude of alcohol-related traffic accidents has assumed serious proportions and shows no sign of diminishing. What is even more alarming is the extent to which alcohol is consumed; also the prevalence of illegal drug use and its potential effect on driving capacity are cause for concerns.

The need for surveillance and research in drug-related traffic accidents is also crucial to the development of strategies aimed at accomplishing traffic safety measures.

This pilot study was carried out in the Kingston, St Andrew and St Catherine areas of Jamaica. It examines the presence of alcohol, marijuana and cocaine in blood samples of 31 persons fatally injured in road traffic accidents during the period January to March, 1991.

A considerable proportion of the samples tested had blood alcohol concentration (BAC) in excess of 50mg/100mls. A combination of alcohol and marijuana was found in 22.5% of the samples. Cocaine was detected in one sample only.

The study also highlights the numerous difficulties and issues which are involved when investigating this highly sensitive problem. Some major issues which are associated with preventive intervention are examined and suggestions for resolution are given.