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La Organización Mundial de la Salud fue creada en 1948 como organismo especializado de las Naciones Unidas para que actuara como autoridad directiva y coordinadora en los asuntos sanitarios y la salud pública a nivel internacional. Una de las funciones constitucionales de la OMS consiste en facilitar información y asesoramiento objetivos y fiables en materia de salud humana, responsabilidad que cumple en parte por conducto de su amplio programa de publicaciones.

Mediante sus publicaciones, la Organización se propone apoyar las estrategias sanitarias nacionales y atender las preocupaciones de salud pública más acuciantes de las poblaciones en todo el mundo. Para responder a las necesidades de los Estados Miembros en todos los niveles de desarrollo, la OMS publica guías prácticas, manuales y material de capacitación para categorías específicas de trabajadores sanitarios; directrices y normas internacionalmente aplicables; revisiones y análisis de las políticas y programas de salud y las investigaciones sanitarias; e informes de consenso sobre el estado actual de los conocimientos, en los que se ofrecen asesoramiento técnico y recomendaciones para los decisores. Esas obras están estrechamente vinculadas con las actividades prioritarias de la Organización, que comprenden la labor de prevención y lucha contra las enfermedades, el desarrollo de sistemas sanitarios equitativos basados en la atención primaria de salud, y la promoción de la salud de los individuos y las comunidades. El avance hacia una mejor salud para todos requiere asimismo la difusión y el intercambio mundiales de información basada en los conocimientos y experiencia de todos los países Miembros, así como la colaboración de los líderes mundiales en el campo de la salud pública y las ciencias biomédicas.

Para velar por la disponibilidad más amplia posible de información y orientación autorizadas sobre los asuntos sanitarios, la OMS asegura la amplia distribución internacional de sus publicaciones y estimula su traducción y adaptación. Ayudando a fomentar y proteger la salud y a prevenir y controlar las enfermedades en todo el mundo, las publicaciones de la OMS contribuyen al objetivo principal de la Organización: alcanzar para todos los pueblos el grado más alto posible de salud.

Las carreteras, construidas para que podamos trasladarnos de un lugar a otro, se convierten a menudo en motivo de pérdida y dolor. Friends for Life (India) valora y apoya la iniciativa emprendida por la OMS para hacer del mundo un lugar más seguro y sensato donde vivir.

Anish Verghese Koshy, Presidente de Friends for Life, Bangalore, India

Los familiares que hemos sobrevivido a víctimas de accidentes de tráfico valoramos la iniciativa de la OMS y la publicación de este informe. No creamos que los conductores son los únicos responsables de causar o prevenir los accidentes de tráfico; debemos tener en cuenta también los vehículos y las carreteras.

Ben-Zion Kryger, Presidente de Yad-Haniktafim, Israel

No hay muchos caminos, sino uno solo, que se extiende a lo ancho y a lo largo de nuestro vasto planeta. Cada uno de nosotros es responsable de un tramo de ese camino. Las decisiones que adoptemos o dejemos de adoptar en materia de seguridad vial podrían influir en última instancia en la vida de la población de todo el planeta, un solo camino, un mismo mundo.

Rochelle Sobel, Presidente de la Association for Safe International Road Travel, Estados Unidos de América

El sufrimiento de las víctimas de traumatismos por accidentes de tráfico y de sus familiares es incalculable. Las consecuencias son innumerables: desmembramiento de las familias; costo elevado del apoyo psicológico a los familiares que han sufrido la pérdida; falta de ingresos familiares cuando desaparece el sostén de la familia; y miles de rand sudafricanos de gastos en cuidados a las personas que han resultado heridas o impedidas. Drive Alive acoge este informe con sumo agrado y apoya firmemente sus recomendaciones.

Moira Winslow, Presidenta de Drive Alive, Sudáfrica

La OMS ha decidido combatir las principales causas de los accidentes de tráfico, un flagelo mundial característico de nuestra era tecnológica, cuyas víctimas se vuelven sigilosamente cada día más numerosas. ¿Cuántas personas mueren o resultan heridas? ¿Cuántas familias en duelo se han visto rodeadas de una indiferencia demasiado frecuente, como si esta situación fuera el tributo inevitable que la sociedad debe pagar por su derecho a viajar? Que con ayuda de organizaciones oficiales y asociaciones de voluntarios, este audaz informe de la OMS dé lugar a una verdadera toma de conciencia, a decisiones eficaces y a un mayor respeto de los usuarios de la vía pública por la vida de los demás.

Jacques Duhayon, Administrador de la Association de Parents pour la Protection des Enfants sur les Routes, Bélgica

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