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'First Responders Can Save Lives'

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CHENNAI: Lack of first responders who can administer first aid in the immediate aftermath of a road accident is the reason for high death toll in road accident cases, according to Dr Ravi Pratap of Fortis Malar Hospitals.

Speaking at an accident simulation and primary trauma care workshop conducted by Survival Instincts and Fortis Malar Hospitals at the Express Avenue Mall here on Saturday, Dr Pratap said, "A first responder is the first link in the chain of survival. The others are emergency transport service and the hospitals. In India, the latter two are decently strong, but the former is very weak or absent in most cases," he said.

Nearly 2, 31,000 lives were lost in road accidents on Indian roads, according to the global status report on road safety for the year 2013. Anoop R Madhavan, founder and lead trainer of Survival Instincts, said that appropriate first aid measures can improve victim survival rates by 95 per cent.

“However, less than four per cent of the public are aware of the basic first aid procedures in an accident trauma scene and only 15 per cent tend to correctly assess the need for calling an ambulance,” said Madhavan.

Joint Commissioner of Traffic (South) R Dhinakaran said that road accidents were a slow poison which claim more lives every year.

“In Chennai, two-wheelers cause most accidents. They are meant to carry two persons, but I think it doesn’t apply here, else you would not find three, four and five members on them,” he added. M Jayaraman, Additional Commissioner, Revenue Administration, Department of Disaster Management and Mitigation, said that road users in a hurry put others at risk as well.

“Motorists should respect and obey traffic rules. When there is a green signal, even if one pedestrian steps on the zebra crossing, the right thing to do is to stop,” he said. Jayaraman also said that he has written to the Chief Minister, calling on her to incentivise those who save an accident victim’s life.

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