

20mph Improves Public Health Says Literature Review

A 20's Plenty for Us Press Release October 2014 www.20splentyforus.org.uk/Prel/PH_Evidence.pdf

20's Plenty



Where People Live

The Journal of Public Health has published a paper summarising research on 20mph zones and limits. Scientific literature confirmed that 20mph is effective at improving public health via reduced accidents and injuries.

On September 28th 2014 a research review led by Dr Jo Cairns from Durham University concluded that 20mph zones and limits effectively improve public health¹. Researchers from Durham University's Geography Department did a review of published systematic reviews to answer the question:

"What are the effects of 20mph zones and limits on health and health equalities?"

With scientific literature search (umbrella review) methodology they identified evidence from five international systematic reviews on 20mph zones (including speed limits and road humps) and 20mph limits on population health. *"Overall, they provide convincing evidence that these measures are effective in reducing accidents and injuries, traffic speed and volume as well as improving perceptions of safety in two of the studies. There was also evidence that such interventions are potentially cost-effective".*

Since those with lower socio economic status are five times more likely to be road injured than those with higher status, it was thought likely that targeting 20mph interventions in deprived areas may be beneficial.

20's Plenty for Us agree and go further. We think everyone deserves safer, better streets and so ask authorities to implement 'Total 20' across urban and village settings. This is a default 20mph limit with exceptions for higher speeds where warranted. It costs about £3 per head and falling².

Dr Jo Cairns of Durham University said

"Our research has shown that 20mph zones are effective at reducing casualties and improving public health"

Professor Clare Bambra of Durham University said

"There could be important implications for reducing health inequalities as poorer areas are at greater risk of road-related injuries. However, this needs to be investigated further "

Rod King MBE of 20's Plenty for Us said

"Most of our iconic cities have already made the decision that the national 30mph limit is no longer fit-for-purpose for their communities. The evidence in road safety, public health, active travel, noise reduction, emissions and simple livability all point towards default 20mph limits becoming the norm for UK communities. This research adds even more weight to the view that current blanket 30mph limits compromise Public Health in our urban realm. It's time for a 20's Plenty policy that sets 20mph as the national default for our urban roads and allows local traffic authorities to except that where higher speeds can be fully justified."

¹ Jo Cairns et al Go slow: an umbrella review of the effects of 20mph zones and limits on health and health inequalities. J of Public Health Advance Access 28 Sept 2014 pp1-6 <http://m.jpubhealth.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2014/09/28/pubmed.fdu067.full>

² http://www.20splentyforus.org.uk/BriefingSheets/Wide_20mph_Limits_Are_Effective.pdf

20's Plenty For Us campaigns for a 20mph default speed limit in residential streets without physical calming.

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