



## Health Cube with School of Empathy and Stress Reduction for Iranian Drivers New Tools for Traffic Psychology and Biocentric Health Management in Iran

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### Dear Editor,

A traffic accident is a serious problem globally. It is the 8th cause of death in the world for people of all ages. Based on the World Health Organization (WHO) global status report on road safety 2018, the number of road traffic deaths continues to rise steadily, reaching 1.35 million in 2016 (1). Road accidents are among the leading causes of death in Iran too. There are 20% more road accidents in Iran last year than in other countries worldwide (2). Risky driving and stress-related psychological reactions can be among the causes of increased traffic accidents (3). Therefore, paying attention to traffic psychology and periodic psychological examinations of drivers, especially in the public transportation and applicants for driving licenses, can lead to a reduction in the number of traffic accidents in the long term.

In Scandinavian countries, standards for driving have been considered. Standard in driving has two meanings: (1) drivers have no human error and (2) they do not commit driving violations in which their psychological condition does not adversely affect their performance. The driving standards include different domains; first, public transport drivers, emergency vehicle drivers, and even train and metro drivers should have some cognitive, empathic, and emotional abilities in which the driver's response is proportional to a particular situation. It means as the response time to a stimulus is lower, the risk of crash decreases equally, and the rate of attention and concentration of drivers should be estimated by scientific methods; consequently, they can increase their concentration by training if it is needed.

Adaptation of the Biocentric Tools of Health Cube in Iran: The "Health-Cube", was developed by the German psychologist Marcus Stueck and colleagues (e.g. Ullrich Sack, immunological diagnostic, Hans-Ullrich Balzer, physiological diagnostics) in Leipzig, Germany is a scientific reflexive and interventional tool for increasing the "Biocentric Health Commitment" in individuals and systems. It can be used for professional drivers as a questionnaire or also as a workshop. The term "Biocentric Health Commitment" was defined in the Health Cube to develop self-motivation and to take self-responsibility in relation to an individual's life (biocentric attitude), behavior, and health in traffic. The Health Cube includes the School of Empathy and School of Stress reduction and Presence (4-6). These strategies are as follow:

(1) To improve the risk management in Iranian professional drivers by undertaking a psychic risk analysis (Health Cube) in 6 areas (e.g. driver stress, coping, conditions, resources, biocentric attitude).

(2) After the risk analysis to train the areas of stress reduction (School of Stress Reduction and Presence) which are needed. Here also we work with Biofeedback.

(3) To train the empathic behavior of Iranian drivers in traffic situations and also for the use in Iranian schools (School of Empathy for adults and children).

As research has shown, the empathy is low when the stress is high (7, 8). More empathy can be generated in traffic situations by using the method of the School of Empathy. In this regard, biocentric value (biocentric means "saving a life", "life orientation"), is developed by training the eye contact in traffic situations or by receiving a new atti-

tude towards saving a life (biocentric principle). There is a significant observation in Iran because the missing of eye contact may result in less empathy in Iranian traffic. This School of Empathy was developed by Stueck and colleagues (2013) and it will be trained for drivers in Iran. For children, it also makes sense to develop a School of Empathy for traffic and life situations.

Another standard for drivers should be the development of the ability to manage the stress (School of Presence and Stress reduction) in Iran, which contains evidence-based programs developed by Stueck or Reschke et al. (5, 9). This School of Stress Reduction and Presence will be adapted to Iranian context and use dor taught to professional drivers in the PhD project of Vahid Delshad. For example, a driver should not have anxiety, chronic disorder, bipolar disorder, or schizophrenia, or should not be quickly excited and stressed, because each of these disorders is problematic, especially in professional drivers such as emergency vehicle and police drivers. That is why a psychic risk analysis with Health Cube and diagnose-based interventions for stress management are necessary.

The Health Cube was developed by Marcus Stueck and colleagues, for the biocentric health management (BHM) in institutional and individual contexts at Leipzig University since 1999. Nowadays, it is being used and continuously researched in different fields of Health Management at DPFA-Academy for Work and Health in Leipzig. It was also modified for other target groups, e.g. for disaster- and emergency management, for health-management in hospitals, and now for drivers, to identify psychic and physiological risk pattern of driving behavior. It is recommended to customize traffic psychology proportional with Iranian culture by the transportation of the managers and policy makers, and developing standards for above-mentioned domains, especially for professional drivers to reduce the

death and injuries caused by road accidents.

## Footnotes

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