



REPORTER

The Newsletter of The International Council on Alcohol, Drugs & Traffic Safety

MESSAGE FROM THE ICADTS PRESIDENT

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Alcobaça, Portugal



ICADTS continues to be active as we approach the end of 2023. Of course, we all look forward to T2025 in Portugal, but in the mean time, following are some important events and developments.

In the Spring of 2024, ICADTS will be electing new officers and Board Members. Nominations are now open for President Elect, Assistant Secretary, Assistant Treasurer and two Board Members at Large. If you know any ICADTS members who would be interested in being nominated for the Board or run for any of the open offices, please contact Past-President Jan Ramaekers (j.ramaekers@maastrichtuniversity.nl). You can nominate yourself if you are a member in good standing. Send us the member’s name and a biography with your nomination. We are especially seeking nominations for low- and middle-income country members to run for the Board.

We are developing an ICADTS Webinar based upon the Impaired Driving Behavioral Interventions ICADTS Interest Group (IDBIIIG) chaired by Tara Casanova Powell and we are currently lining up speakers. If you would like to present information from your country or your jurisdiction on behavioral interventions to reduce impaired driving, please contact Tara (taracpc@outlook.com). If you have suggestions for additional ICADTS webinars, please contact me or Evelyn Vingilis (evingili@uow.ca) with the proposed subject and whether you would like to lead the webinar or be a presenter.

ICADTS members are always interested in what is happening as far as alcohol, drugs and traffic safety in the individual countries of our members. If you have data on impaired driving crash fatalities, injuries or total crashes in recent years or programs that have been successful in your country, please send me some information describing the data and your interpretation of its meaning. I believe ICADTS members can help other countries with their descriptions of their impaired driving problem and impaired driving reduction programs.

One of our goals is to encourage members of low- and middle-income countries (LMIC) to join ICADTS. We believe that one of the most valuable services that ICADTS can provide is learning from each other across national boundaries. Greater participation from LMIC can greatly enhance mutual learning. We also need suggestions on how we can better disseminate and/or publicize the important impaired driving research and program evaluations emanating from ICADTS.

Sincerely,
Jim Fell, ICADTS President

www.icadtsinternational.COM

The International Council on Alcohol, Drugs & Traffic Safety (ICADTS) is an independent nonprofit body whose only goal is to reduce mortality and morbidity brought about by misuse of alcohol and drugs by operators of vehicles in all modes of transportation.



ICADTS hopes that 2024 will be a year full of personal and professional success, with safety every day.

TOWARDS T2025

TIME FOR CHANGE: TRAFFIC SAFETY FOR A SUSTAINABLE WORLD- 15-18 JUNE/2025

We're nearing the end of 2023.

This year has seen important milestones as it marked the start of preparations for such an important congress: **T2025- Time for Change: Traffic Safety for a Sustainable World- 15-18 June/2025**, which will take place in Alcobaca, Portugal.

In order for everything to be perfect (we hope), we are connecting entities and people from the fantastic city of Alcobaca to get involved in organizing this fantastic congress and welcoming you in an enthusiastic and engaging way (<https://www.centerofportugal.com/pt/destination/alcobaca-2>).

This year, we set the direction and in 2024 we will give you all the news to welcome you.

We would like to thank the support from our ICADTS Board colleagues and give a special thanks to Flavio Pechansky (President-Elect) and future ICADTS President for his visit to Alcobaca. For two days (October 23rd and 24th, 2023) we had the privilege of his visit.

We met with the Mayor of Alcobaca (Hermínio Rodrigues) and his team (represented by José Mendes) as well as with the President of the Alcobaca and Vestiaria Parish Council (Isabel Fonseca), with the President of the Commercial, Industrial and Services Association of Alcobaca and the Leiria Region (ACSIA- Inácia Caeiro- also parte of the organizing committee), with the company handling administrative matters (DigitWare- José Ruivo), with one of the companies responsible for communications (Wisebrand- Joana Batista). All lined up for a congress that we want to be memorable in our land of passion.

Here are some records of these moments:

Left: Celebrating partnerships and dedicated work for T2025 with Flavio Pechansky; with the Mayor of Alcobaca and his team; with the Commercial, Industrial and Services Association of Alcobaca and the Leiria Region (ACSIA) and also with Digitware. Right: One of our fantastic partner hotels.



We'll be starting 2024 with fresh news in the next Reporter about T2025 and its scientific program.

We wish all our ICADTS friends and colleagues a happy holidays and may 2024 be fantastic and fabulous. Why not think about Portugal and Alcobaca and its wonderful beaches before or after T2025?

Strong Hugs

Fátima Pereira da Silva

ICADTS Conference Chair

Inácia Caeiro

(ICADTS Conference- Co-chair)

See you soon...

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ICADTS; SPRINGBOARD TO A BRIGHT FUTURE

Seyed Sepehr Hashemian



I was invited as an early-career researcher to present my work at the 2022 ICADTS conference in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. At that time, I was just finishing my Ph.D. in the Allameh Tabataba'i University in Iran. My presentation at ICADTS was the first I had done on impaired driving, a topic in which I became interested during the last months of my doctoral dissertation, which was about decision-making behavior. My presentation at ICADTS was entitled "Risk factors for drug driving in Iran: A narrative review" and was part of the "Impaired driving in Muslim countries: Laws and behaviors" symposium chaired by Prof. Marie Claude Ouimet. I was fortunate to receive a Young Scientist stipend to facilitate my participation at the conference.

While attending the conference was instrumental in determining my next career path (i.e., finding a post-doctoral internship), I almost did not make it! I remember waiting for my visa, which arrived attached to my passport on the morning of the flight day that I had to postpone until the second day of the conference. I also remember the 12-hour flight to Rotterdam, the train strike in the Netherlands, and my arrival in Rotterdam on the second afternoon of the conference, carrying my backpack and luggage, having to deliver my presentation in the symposium.

What I remember the most, however, was the atmosphere at the conference. It was so engaging and captivating that I quickly forgot all of the stress and the hours traveling and started eagerly to meet my colleagues and participate in the multiple sessions. During my time at the conference, I had the chance to become familiar with the latest research in the field of impaired driving, which strengthened my wishes to develop my knowledge and skills in this area. With my initial background in alcohol and drug abuse treatment, my unique experience in setting up outpatient treatment centers for alcohol use, and a decade of clinical work stemmed from my experience in clinical settings in Iran, I became motivated to apply and develop my knowledge to the context of impaired driving. Prof. Ouimet and her team were also presenting on the topic of population interventions with impaired drivers and had advertised at the end of their presentation the availability of a postdoctoral internship. The magic operated, and I am now a postdoctoral fellow at the *Université de Sherbrooke* in Canada collaborating on several projects, including the Quebec remedial program for impaired drivers. Also, I recently started a project in which we investigated the duality of "Intention & Willingness" in alcohol-impaired driving and which of them may more effectively explain this behavior; this serves as a fantastic opportunity for me to test and assess my long-standing concern about human behavior and how unconscious thought (willingness) plays a role in daily decision-making. Furthermore, as a member of an interdisciplinary group, we are examining the WHO alcohol consumption database and its related characteristics in Muslim countries in order to identify its common and distinct aspects in order to picture a larger trend for academics and policymakers in this sector.

Participating in the ICADTS conference not only provided me with an unparalleled experience for familiarizing myself with the research in impaired driving, but I had the chance to meet and attend the presentations of several experienced colleagues and experts in the field. This experience now counts as a significant step in my personal and professional life. I am looking forward to presenting my work at the next ICADTS conference!

INTERVENTIONS TO REDUCE DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ALCOHOL, CANNABIS AND OTHER NARCOTICS: AN EYE ON COSTA RICA AND ANOTHER ON LATIN AMERICA

Summary report

On the 30th of November and 1st of December, the *Consejo Nacional de Seguridad Vial* (National Council on Traffic Safety) of Costa Rica hosted in Costa Rica's capital - San Jose, a meeting jointly sponsored by ICADTS and the *Université de Sherbrooke*. This meeting had two aims: to bring together key players in the field of traffic safety and alcohol abuse and discuss scenarios to improve both legislation and enforcement— using Costa Rica's currently upgrading of its traffic law as a case study.

Day 1 (November 30)

The following objective was designed to work with local stakeholders: "Know and understand the impact and scope of interventions aimed at reducing the risks of driving vehicles under the effects of alcohol and other narcotic substances in Costa Rica, from the professional experience of professionals whose activities are directly linked to the implementation strategies of these interventions".



Upcoming Events

Transportation Research Board Annual Meeting

January 7–11, 2024

Washington, D.C. USA

www.trb.org

T2025

15-18 June, 2025

Alcobaça, Portugal

www.icadtsinternational.com

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<https://www.icadtsinternational.com/Newsletter>



During the morning presentations from Costa Rica’s authorities, including professionals working in Costa Rica’s national congress, COSEVI, study groups, Professor Pechansky and Professor Nazif-Munoz, the audience composed of 20 professionals, including representatives from the police, forensic office, COSEVI, ministry of infrastructure and health services, among others, was divided in small focus groups with “seed questions” to initiate discussions – such as “Socio-institutional factors that act as obstacles; successful experiences; and benefits for implementation” – at the institutional and socio-cultural levels. This work led to very important conclusions regarding how to improve enforcement practices by working with members of different state sectors, such as the judicial power and the parliament.

Day 2 (December 1)

This day eight researchers focused on shared experiences from different Latin-American countries. Presentations were made from specialists of Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Mexico, Peru, and Uruguay. Most presentations focused on legal aspects and how to limit the consumption of alcohol/marijuana balanced versus enforcement – and one had comparative aspects of historical legal frameworks on alcohol of 183 countries. All the presentations are in Spanish and are available upon request. A summary of these two days is being prepared for publication as a full report. The immediate actions that are being suggested as an outcome of these first meetings are the following:

- (a) To include consultants from ICADTS as part of the framework of information aimed at updating the legal system of Costa Rica’s laws on DWI with an explicit attention to cannabis.
- (b) To submit an application to create an ICADTS Interest Group on Latin-America, focusing on generating a basic research/policy/action agenda.
- (c) To discuss the possibility of a regional ICADTS meeting in Latin America in 2024.

Flavio Pechansky, MD, MSc, PhD, President Elect, ICADTS

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Roy Rojas

Road Safety’s Project Director

National Road Safety Council of Costa Rica

VISION ZERO AND IMPAIRED DRIVING

A recent paper analyzed the potential of a “Vision Zero” approach for impaired driving crash prevention. Vision Zero involves the use of a systems approach to eliminate fatal and serious injuries from motor vehicle crashes by accommodating basic human limitations that lead to crashes through fundamental behavioral expectations, together with sound vehicle and road design.

From the Vision Zero perspective, “normal driving” refers to a situation where traffic and road users are operating as desired and planned. A driver in this normal driving envelope operates at a safe speed, wears a seat belt, focuses on the driving task, and is not impaired. A safe system accommodates human errors, mistakes, and misjudgments in the normal driving envelope. However, it may not be capable of compensating for deliberate violations and rule breaking.

A critical role of behavioral programs and policies is to motivate safe decisions by drivers and other road users and keep them in the normal driving envelope where they can be protected from unintentional errors by a safe system. While much progress has been made in developing and implementing impaired driving policies and programs, much potential remains in their ability to motivate drivers to meet the fundamental expectations required in a safe system.

Examples of behavioral programs and policies that have strong evidence of effectiveness but are underutilized in the U.S. include conducting periodic sobriety checkpoints, lowering the blood alcohol concentration limit for driving, and mandating the use of ignition interlock devices. While the specific interventions may differ, it is likely that the same situation of incomplete implementation of behavioral programs and policies - and consequent unrealized value to a comprehensive safe system - applies to many other nations.

To reach the goal of zero deaths, a comprehensive Vision Zero program needs to address the problem of deliberate risk-taking, which can include driver impairment from alcohol or other causes and extend to dangerous and reckless driving. Advanced safety technologies offer a range of opportunities for this purpose. Interventions could range from those that are not perceivable to the driver, such as putting driver assist systems into active mode, to stronger steps such as limiting or preventing vehicle operation.

The authors concluded that Zero fatalities or serious injuries in motor vehicle crashes is possible with a systems approach that accommodates human errors and mistakes that occur with the normal driving envelope and incorporates effective responses to deliberate risk-taking outside of this envelope.

Source: Anders Lie, Claes Tingvall, Jeffrey P. Michael, James C. Fell, Tho Bella Dinh-Zarr, Vision Zero and Impaired Driving: Near and Longer-Term Opportunities for Preventing Death and Injuries, *Accident Analysis and Prevention*, Volume 194, 2024, 107344, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aap.2023.107344>.

USING FIELD SOBRIETY TEST TO DETECT CANNABIS IMPAIRMENT

A recent study explored various tests of impairment that could potentially be added to the Standardized Field Sobriety Test (SFST) to enhance its sensitivity to identify drivers whose abilities are adversely affected by cannabis.

An observational study was conducted in which participants were invited to use their own cannabis at the research facility. Once prior to cannabis use and at four times during the 150 min after cannabis use, participants performed the three tests of the Standardized Field Sobriety Test (SFST) (i.e., Horizontal Gaze Nystagmus, Walk and Turn, and One Leg Stand) as well as the Modified Romberg Balance and Finger to Nose tests. Tests and assessments were administered and scored by certified Drug Recognition Experts using the standard procedures of the Drug Evaluation and Classification Program.

Twenty minutes after vaping cannabis (mean THC concentration = 6.34 ng/mL), participants displayed performance deficits on a variety of tasks; 67% met the criterion for suspected impairment on the SFST. Addition of the Finger-to-Nose (FTN) test along with observations of head movements and jerks (HMJ) increased the percentage of participants who met the criterion for suspected impairment by 33% and improved the sensitivity of the test from 0.67 to 0.88.

The results of this study support supplementing the SFST with the Finger-to-Nose test and observations of HMJ to assist in the detection of drivers who are adversely affected by the use of cannabis. The observational study design and the use of assessors who were not blinded as to the use of cannabis by participants limits the strength of the evidence. Further research, including randomized trials and field studies of drivers, is required to confirm and validate this enhanced version of the SFST.

Enhancing the Standardized Field Sobriety Test to detect cannabis impairment: An observational study, Beirmess, Douglas J., Smith, D’Arcy, Brubacher, Jeff R. 2024/01/02, *Traffic Injury Prevention*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15389588.2023.2262658>