Avoid road rage, rash driving to curb road mishaps: Expert

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RESPONSIBLE behaviour on roads and avoiding road rage and aggressive driving are the key to reducing number of accidents and the resultant injuries and deaths, says the Director of Global and Public Health and Instructor in Healthcare Policy and Research Dr Sohaila Cheema.

Speaking to Qatar Tribune recently on the sidelines of Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar's (WCMC-Q) Ask the Expert series of public discussions where she tackled, 'Road Behaviour and Your Health', Dr Cheema said the leading cause of death of young people (15-29 year olds) is road accident, which is preventable.

She said that inappropriate road behaviour including road rage and aggressive driving cause a lot of injuries, disabilities and deaths all over the world.

"By simply changing our behaviour on roads, we can bring down both the number of accidents and the damages to life and property caused by it. Road rage and aggressive driving are both highly inappropriate behaviours which we need to recognise and check. Motorists must avoid tailgating, speeding and changing lanes to curb road mishaps," Dr Cheema pointed out.

Dr Cheema added,"If you have someone tailgating you, just be calm, switch lanes if there is space but do not react. If you react to the person in the same way, then you also become an aggressive driver."

Linking the behaviour on roads to the negativity of thoughts in our day to day affairs, she said,"Learn to be compassionate and kind to others. These days we are very critical of others, which reflects our behaviour on roads as well."

According to her, factors causing some of the distress on the road include aggressive behaviour/ reckless
driving, other human factors such as fatigue, emotional distress, visual impairment, unsafe vehicles, unsafe road environment (infrastructure, road design, road works, weather conditions) and traffic congestion.

Explaining the difference between road rage and aggressive driving, Dr Cheema said,"The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration states that road rage involves a criminal act of violence whereas aggressive driving can range from tailgating to speeding to jumping red lights."

Dr Cheema said that it is the individual responsibility of every resident to behave responsibly on roads to make them safer for people and to support Qatar in its efforts to reduce accidents.

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