journal² is quite aberrant compared with eight other reviews found at <http://www.scienceservingociety.com>.

Another reviewer wrote "Evans' work covers in remarkable detail the full range of important topics ... but his chapter *The Dramatic Failure of U.S. Safety Policy* is the showstopper".³ This "showstopper" shows that while Canadian fatalities declined by 50%, US fatalities declined by 16%. I attribute this to a US narrow focus on vehicle factors supported by a giant litigation industry devoted to its own interests, not to safety.

As one who supported and profited from that industry, it is understandable that Robertson should seek to discredit my book. The fact that all he could come up with were extraneous trivia adds support to my thesis. Vehicle factors cannot explain the huge Canada/USA difference in the raw data, because vehicles in both countries are similar; nor can demographic factors.

In the quest for clarity and understanding I have debunked many hocus pocus opaque analyses that manage to find sought-after effects invisible in raw data. My 1991 book critiqued two much cited studies (one by Robertson) on the safety benefits of vehicle regulation. Analyzing the same data, one study reports absurdly high benefits, the other zero benefits. I characterized both as "the triumph of zeal over science, or perhaps even common sense".

One reviewer concludes "Evans has a clear passion for getting the right answers ... one senses that his agenda is simply to understand how to improve traffic safety" and another "Evans's book dismisses much of the folklore very effectively".

It is common in data analysis to discard a point that departs widely from the trend when there are additional reasons for considering it suspect. Robertson's review meets such a standard.

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Injury prevention and poverty

Dr Pless's editorial on injury prevention and terrorism in the October issue of the journal addresses perhaps the two most pressing problems of society at this time—poverty and terrorism.¹ For us in the field of injury

prevention, one of the threads that ties preventing injuries to addressing poverty is education. Educated individuals have lower rates of risk taking behaviors, less exposure to hazardous environments, better use of safety devices, and thus lower rates of fatal and non-fatal injuries. In the developing world, one of the best predictors of infant mortality and a break in the intergenerational cycle of poverty is the educational status of the parents, especially the mother. Early education can have a lifelong effect on later academic success and thus employment success.

How do we translate Dr Pless's words and mine above to meaningful action? The commentaries from two heroes of injury prevention in the same edition of the journal demonstrate far better than our words that actions by single individuals can make a difference across an entire country.^{2,3}

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- 3 **McGuire A.** To burn or not to burn: an advocate's report from the field. *Inj Prev* 2005;11:264-6.

CALENDAR

2006 RoSPA Road Safety Congress: the Road to Safer Behaviour

27 February to 1 March 2006, Blackpool, England. Visit www.rospa.com/road/index.htm for further information.

Ontario Injury Prevention Conference 2006

5-7 March, 2006, Toronto. The theme of the conference is "injury prevention through the ages". Visit www.oipc.org for more information.

XII International Winter Road Congress

27-30 March 2006, Torino, Italy. Visit www.aipcr2006.it for further information for this meeting, organised by the World Road Association.

Reducing Firearm-Related Mortality and Morbidity: Data to Action

31 March to 1 April 2006, Durban, South Africa. The objectives of the conference are to

examine how the collection and linkage of accurate and relevant data can assist in developing policies aimed at the prevention and reduction of firearm-related death and injuries, giving examples of good practice in this regard and identifying limitations and obstacles; and to examine how data are translated into action to prevent firearm related death and injury, giving examples of good practice, exploring the ways in which the social, political, and economic environment either inhibits or facilitates the translation of data into action. Further information available from <http://tinyurl.com/as2rr>.

6th International Conference on Measuring the Burden of Injury

1 April 2006, Durban, South Africa. The conference objectives are to promote the understanding, use, and development of interdisciplinary health status and injury outcomes measures; to provide a forum for injury scientists from around the world to discuss emerging issues in the measurement of injury outcomes; and to encourage a harmonized approach to injury outcomes research. For further information contact Stephen Luchter on sluchter@earthlink.net.

8th World Conference on Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion

2-5 April 2006, Durban, South Africa. Further information and key dates available from www.safety2006.info.

International Society for Child and Adolescent Injury Prevention (ISCAIP) Bi-Annual Conference

5-6 April 2006, Durban, South Africa. For further information visit www.iscaip.net.

2nd International Seminar on Injury Research Methods

6-7 April 2006, Cape Town, South Africa. Organised by ECOSA-Eurosafe and the Medical Research Council. For more information contact Saakje Mulder on s.mulder@consafe.nl or visit www.mrc.ac.za/conference/ecosa/index.htm.

15th International Safe Communities Conference: Creating a Safer Environment

9-11 April 2006, Cape Town, South Africa. Visit <http://tinyurl.com/dn3sr> for further information.

Australian Injury Prevention Network 8th National Injury Prevention Conference

27-29 September 2006, Sydney, Australia. Visit www.aipn.com.au/conference.html for further information.