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## Canada-based transport researcher from Bangladesh wins global award

Transport ministers from around the world honour work on walkable cities at Summit in Germany

Dr. Monir Moniruzzaman, a Bangladesh-born post-doctoral research associate at the University of Toronto, Canada, has been named “Young Researcher of the Year” 2016 by the International Transport Forum. He is being honoured by the intergovernmental organisation for his work on helping cities to become more walkable.

More walkable neighbourhoods are increasingly important, not least because of the growing number of seniors in many cities. Easily accessible local services allow older citizens in particular to fully participate in their community. Understanding what encourages walking is thus important for decision makers in cities.

Dr. Moniruzzaman’s winning paper identifies microscopic factors in our built environment that encourage seniors to walk. The study also points a way to making walkability audits easier and cheaper, providing policy makers, transport planners or city designers with a useful tool that can improve decision-making.

For his study, Dr. Moniruzzaman estimated the likely walking behaviour of seniors on the Island of Montreal (Quebec, Canada), based on a choice model. In a second step, he carried out a walkability audit for those street segments where travel-diary data showed seniors either walking more or walking less than predicted by the model. These audits checked whether the microscopic factors thought to influence walking behaviour were typically present or absent at these locations.

The results showed that walking is more prevalent on streets that have marked crosswalks, horizontal and vertical mixture in uses and low traffic volumes – and less prevalent on streets dominated by single residential homes or vacant land and with a lot of traffic. “This means a more walkable neighbourhood should be associated with highly connected and marked sidewalks, have mixture in land uses and a fewer traffic,” explains Dr. Moniruzzaman. “These neighbourhoods should also have four or more way intersections, as opposed to cul-de-sac or three-way intersections, pedestrian-oriented lighting and coffee shops as meeting places.”

José Viegas, Secretary-General of the ITF and member of the jury, praised the study: "This innovative work shows scientifically that some street environments are more attractive for elderly people, and thus facilitate their social inclusion. It is highly commendable for both the rigour of the analysis and the value of the results obtained."

The Honourable Marc Garneau, Canada's Minister of Transport, said: "I am pleased to be presenting this award to Dr Moniruzzaman on May 19 for his outstanding research recognized by the ITF. Data provided by such models help predict infrastructure required to provide a safe and accessible transportation system that not only protects pedestrians, but all road users".

"Winning this award is a great encouragement for my work on creating a healthy neighbourhood where people will be more conducive to walking and less likely to drive," said Dr. Moniruzzaman.

The Award carries a prize of EUR 5 000. It will be presented on 19 May during the 2016 Summit of transport ministers in Leipzig/Germany, in the presence of ministers from the 57 member countries of the ITF.

The published paper is available at <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0966692315002215> (subscription required)

Dr. Moniruzzaman is available for media interviews during the Summit.

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**About the Award**

The ITF Young Researcher of the Year Award aims to highlight the importance of transport research for sound transport policy formulation and implementation and to foster closer links between transport policy and research. The award carries a prize of 5 000 euros. It is open to young researchers under 35 years of age who have undertaken their research in an institution, university or consultancy firm located in a member country of the International Transport Forum. [More about the ITF Awards](#)

**About the International Transport Forum**

The International Transport Forum is an intergovernmental organisation with 57 member countries. It acts as a think tank for transport policy and organises the Annual Summit of transport ministers. ITF is the only global body that covers all transport modes. The ITF is administratively integrated with the OECD, yet politically autonomous. [More about the International Transport Forum](#)

**About the Annual Summit of Transport Ministers**

ITF's Annual Summit is the world's largest gathering of transport ministers and the leading global platform for dialogue on transport policy. The 2015 Summit convenes in Leipzig, Germany from **18-20 May 2016** on the theme of "Green and Inclusive Transport". [More about the Summit programme](#)