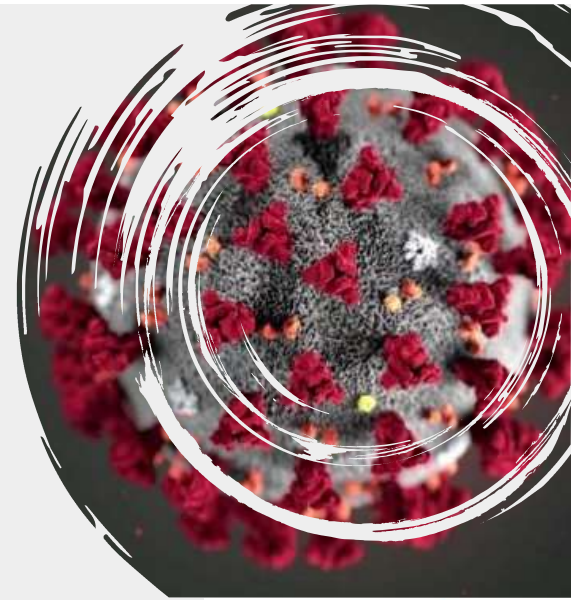


The temporary ban on alcohol sales during levels 4 & 5 of Covid-19 lockdown in South Africa: Lessons learnt

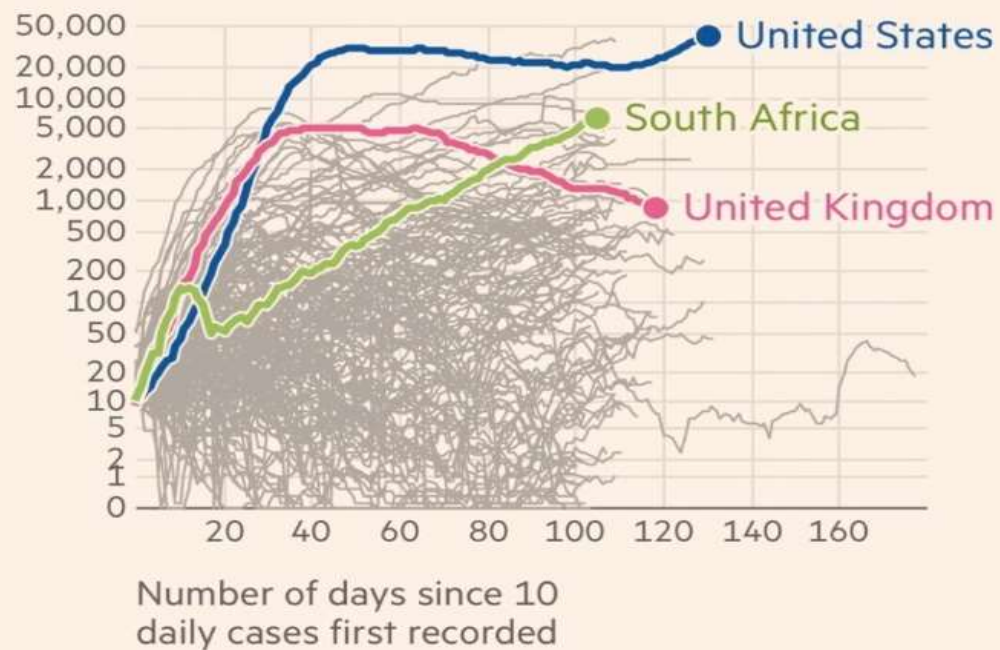
Prof Charles Parry
South African Medical Research Council
3 July 2020



The context

New confirmed cases of Covid-19 in United States, United Kingdom and South Africa

Seven-day rolling average of new cases, by number of days since 10 average cases first recorded



Source: Financial Times analysis of data from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, the Covid Tracking Project and the UK Dept of Health & Social Care. Data updated July 1 2020 10.20am BST

ALCOHOL & COVID-19: LINKAGES



Why a temporary ban on alcohol sales in South Africa?

- 30-35% of adults drink, but 50-60% engage in HED
 - 6th highest globally in grams AA/drinker/day
 - ~62,000 alcohol-caused deaths/year
- **Known links with crime, violence & injury**

Phases of Covid-19 lockdown in South Africa vis-à-vis alcohol (2020)

January - 18 March

Pre-lockdown

Normal restrictions on alcohol sales

19 – 26 March

Lockdown lite

On & off-consumption liquor outlets Mon-Sat: close 18:00-09:00 (next day); Sunday & public holidays: close 13:00. For on-consumption outlets above plus 50 pax limit

27 March – 31 May

Lockdown levels 4 & 5

Complete ban on the sale of liquor during 66-day lockdown and no transportation of liquor + limitations on movement, work etc. Alcohol declared “non-essential”. Some easing of movement for work & exercise in Level 4 , but 20:00 – 05:00 curfew

1 June

Level 3

Alcohol can be sold from both on- & off-consumption outlets from 9 am to 17:00 Monday – Thursday & not public holidays. Only transportation of liquor on these days + opening up of work, movement, no curfew, etc.

SAMRC/UCT *Model* of alcohol-related trauma admissions in South Africa (developed in level 5)



01

Trauma admissions – pre-lockdown

~42,700 per week across 350+ public 2^o & 3^o hospitals
40% (~17,000) alcohol-related

Trauma admissions in lockdown levels 4 & 5

65% drop in admissions due to lockdown* to ~15,000/week
Est ~10,250 less alcohol-related admissions (60% drop)

02



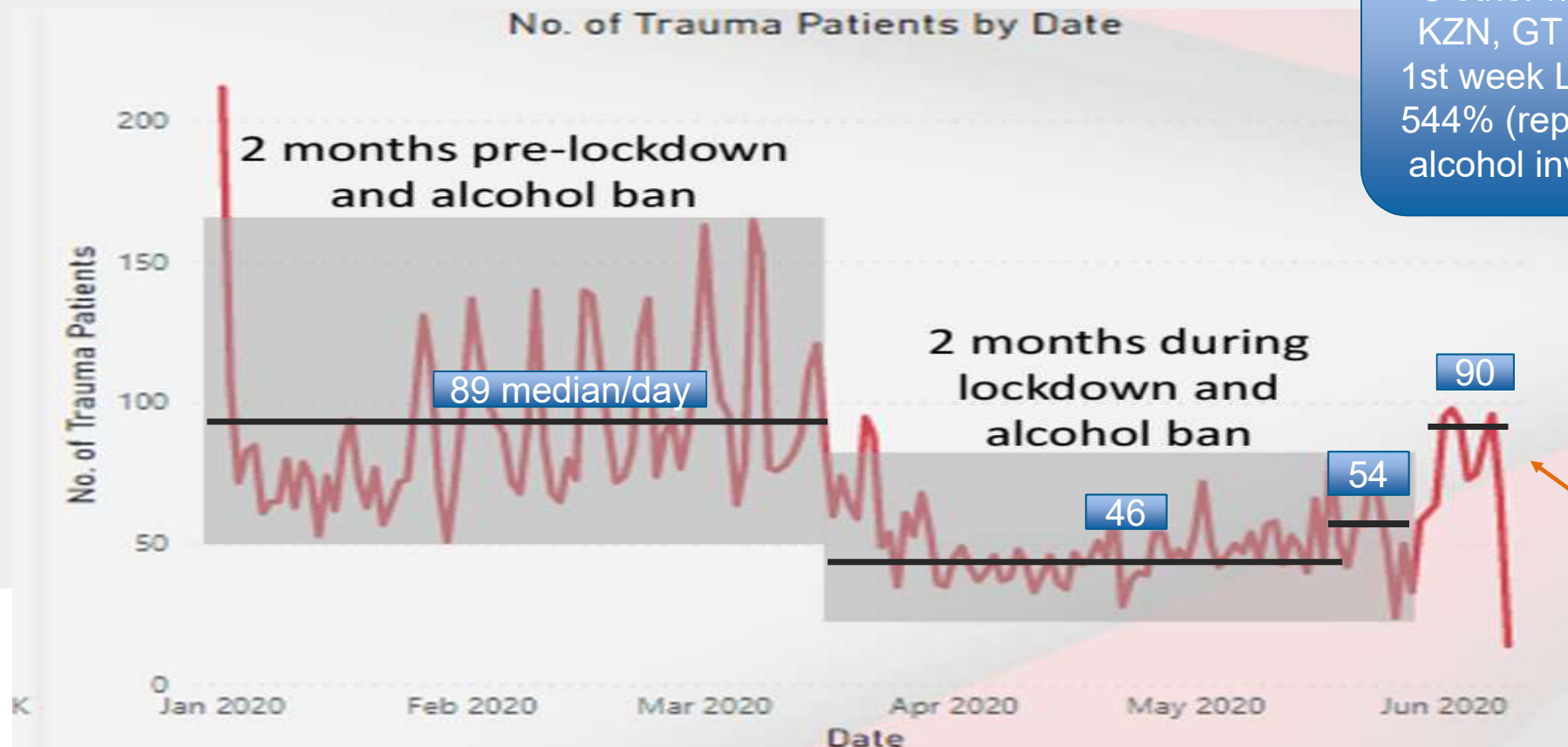
03

Est. alcohol-related trauma admissions if ban on liquor sales lifted

Through a process of consensus making, we estimated ~5,000 (48%)* returning per week if alcohol sales ban lifted:

- 62% of violence injuries
- 30% of motor vehicle injuries
- 38% of 'other'

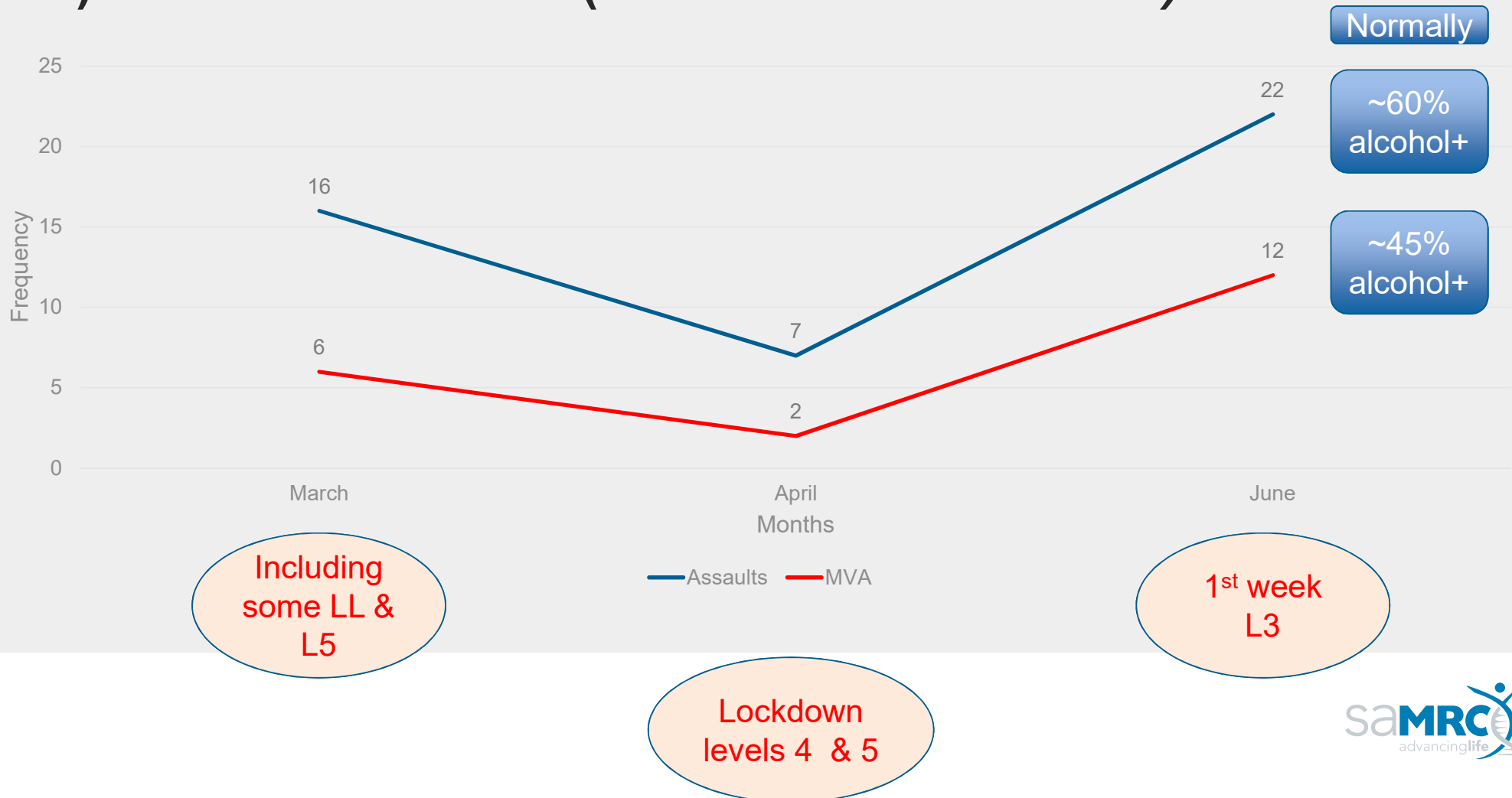
Taken from Sentinel **Trauma** Report – WC Department of Health from 5 hospitals in the Western Cape (11,513 patients since January 2020)



5 other hospitals in KZN, GT & NW ↑ in 1st week L3 of 100%-544% (reports of high alcohol involvement)

R5.7m extra* (267K)

ASSAULT & MVA CASES CHARLOTTE MAXEKE HOSPITAL (GT) – AVERAGE / DAY (*SUNDAY TIMES* 7/6/20)



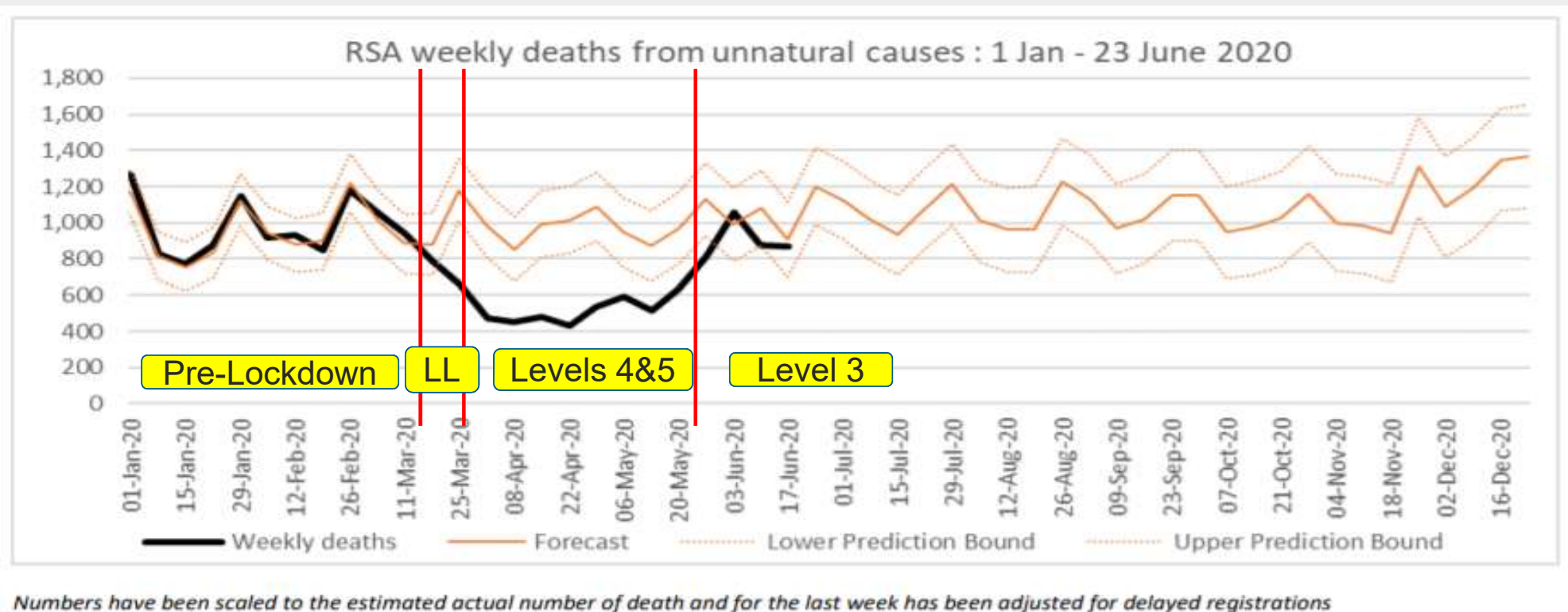
A POSSIBLE 5TH REASON FOR ADDRESSING ALCOHOL AS PART OF COVID19 RESPONSE: COST SAVINGS

MODEL RESULTS	
Injury	Total Cost
Blunt force trauma	R 139,702,613.51
Burns	R 16,527,830.19
Stab	R 20,674,310.75
Road Traffic Collisions	R 75,062,747.16
Gunshot	R 30,338,321.65
Poisoning/Self Harm	R 66,280,515.90
Falls	R 256,033,086.09
Gender-based and Sexual Violence	R 11,829,855.34
TOTAL	R 616,449,280.59

Weekly savings from having less trauma admissions per week during #lockdown 4 & 5 in SA using model

Total est. savings over 66 days
~R5.8 bn (£ 272 m)
Focusing on short term savings from consumables, pharmaceuticals, & goods/services: R1.5 bn (£73m)

NON NATURAL DEATHS – SOUTH AFRICA (SAMRC)



REFLECTIONS

❑ Government

- Was encouraged by gov't lawyers stating that the sale of alcohol is not an essential service (17/4/20)
- Public relations for ban on liquor sales & link with Covid-19 could have been better
- Should have been more sensitive (responsive) to persons with alcohol dependence
- Expert input initially sought to support legal challenges but later actively sought
- Encouraged by President's statement (18/6/20) that we need more strategic measures to curb alcohol abuse --- several doors have opened up for me to present ideas to government/ANC

❑ Industry

- Downplayed the effect of the liquor ban on ↓ trauma admissions & challenged logic

❑ Advocacy

- Covid-19 lockdown has helped raise awareness of the burden imposed by alcohol on SA society in mainstream and social media)
- Allowed the issue of what a new normal could be to be raised as well for academics & civil society to put on the agenda alcohol policy control measures to be considered both during the lower levels of lockdown and beyond*
- Community voices were also heard (but not enough)

❑ Research

- In 1st week after reinstatement of liquor sales we saw a resurgence of alcohol-related trauma admissions: In some cases not yet back to pre-lockdown levels (WC), but in other cases (some GT) exceeding
- Highlighted need for better capturing of trauma admissions & assessing alcohol-relatedness)



Reducing Covid19 individual and social risks related to alcohol during lockdown level 3

Prof Charles Parry, SAMRC (24/6/2020)

(Many would be good to consider also as we consider 'new normal' vis-à-vis alcohol)

Covid-19 goal vis-à-vis alcohol >>>>>>>>>		↓risk for community transmission by ensuring physical distancing	↓risk for alcohol-related trauma	↓risk for <u>alcohol-related</u> GBV	↓risk for compromised lung health & immunity – (heavy drinkers)
Strategy					
Limit Availability	Limit hours for off-consumption sales from outlets with off-consumption licenses (Mon-Thurs: 09:00-17:00)#	X			X
	Limit on quantities purchased**		X	X	X
	Alternate income generation for home-based shebeens	X	X	X	X
	Raise drinking age to 19 years**	X	X	X	
	No delivery by driver not employed by outlet with liquor license***				X
	No off-sales by on-consumption outlets (or any unlicensed outlet)	X			
Drink driving countermeasures and policing of public drinking	↓BAC level for drivers to 0.02 g AA/100ml blood		X		
	Test blood alcohol after serious motor vehicle collisions		X		
	Enforcement of local public drinking by-laws	X			
Increase price	Consider raising benchmarks for excise taxes (additional ≥2% of RSP)		X	X	X
	Tax AFBs at the same rate as spirits				X
	Implement minimum unit pricing (R10/unit)		X	X	X
Advertising and packaging	Only permit advertising <u>factual</u> information about product (not lifestyle) & only at point of sale	X		X	X
	Ban sale of alcohol in containers linked to heavy drinking e.g. <u>1 liter</u> beers, 5L wines	X	X	X	X
	Implement tracking system for tracking alcohol products back to source of supply		?	X	X
Treatment & brief intervention	Intensify availability of counselling & medically assisted treatment for persons struggling with dependence		X	X	X

*-Equivalent of 24 standard drinks (24 x 330ml beers or 4 bottles 750 ml wine or 1 bottle 750ml spirits); **-everybody to present ID at point of sale/delivery. ***-delivery no sooner than 2 hours after order made & do age verification before handing over. #Revisit after Covid19 sorted.

CONCLUSION

BUSINESSTECH

No plans to reinstate alcohol ban in South Africa at this time: government

MAVERICK CITIZEN

Nelson Mandela Bay on the brink of full-blown hospital bed crisis

By Estelle Ellis • 22 June 2020

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Hospitals in Nelson Mandela Bay were implementing emergency plans on Monday as the number of coronavirus cases in the metro neared 5,000 and was expected to double in the next 10 days.

