



Physical activity decreased by 48% during hard lockdown Vitality data shows

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Discovery Vitality launches report that measured the impact of COVID-19 on health behaviours and preventative screenings

1 December 2020 - Discovery Vitality today announced the release of its Care Gap Report which highlights the extent to which members engaged in health behaviours and accessed health promotion and preventative services during COVID-19 lockdown.

Commenting on the results, Dr Mosima Mabunda, Head of Wellness at

Discovery Vitality said, “We analysed Vitality data to gain insights into health behaviours and preventative screening and vaccination rates among Vitality members during the COVID-19 pandemic. While it was pleasing to note that there were increases in flu and pneumococcal booster vaccinations, especially among seniors, we found that the total number of Vitality Health Checks decreased by a staggering 45% in 2020. This was in line with local and global trends due to the unavailability of health care services and people not presenting to healthcare facilities due to fear of contracting COVID-19. It was further unsurprising to see that the total number of HIV tests decreased by 41%, as most Vitality members perform their HIV test in conjunction with the Vitality Health Check.”

In terms of health behaviours, we saw decreases in physical activity levels during hard lockdown. Vitality data shows that physical activity levels in South Africa decreased by 48%, 20% and 27% during lockdown levels 5, 4 and 3, respectively. Yet, we know that lifestyle behaviours, such as physical activity, can reduce the impact of COVID-19-related hospitalisation risk by up to 11%. As lockdown levels eased and physical activity options increased, we have seen members resume physical activity.

Furthermore, in line with our internal findings, a Vitality survey conducted in September 2020 found that 42% of respondents had not had health checks done since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in South Africa, with 35% citing the fear of getting infected with COVID-19 as the main reason. While half of respondents reported being more uncomfortable with visiting a hospital compared to before the pandemic, the majority felt comfortable visiting a GP or pharmacy for screenings.

“Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) account for 71% of global deaths each year. It is therefore essential for members to know their health numbers and screening enables that. The key benefits of preventative screening services are that they allow for early detection of illnesses and allow for timeous management of health conditions. It is however still important to remain cautious and adhere to non-pharmaceutical interventions to minimise the spread of COVID-19”, Dr Mosima Mabunda added.

Nonetheless, it is encouraging to see that despite a reduction in preventative screenings, more than half (59%) of respondents planned on catching up on missed health checks before the end of the year, a promising figure given Vitality’s imperative to empower and incentivise members to prioritise

accessing health promotion and screening services in a safe way.

The full research report is attached.

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Discovery information

About Discovery

Discovery Limited is a South African-founded financial services organisation that operates in the healthcare, life assurance, short-term insurance, savings and investment and wellness markets. Since inception in 1992, Discovery has been guided by a clear core purpose – to make people healthier and to enhance and protect their lives. This has manifested in its globally recognised Vitality Shared-Value insurance model, active in 24 markets with over 20 million members. The model is exported and scaled through the Global Vitality Network, an alliance of some of the largest insurers across key markets including AIA (Asia), Ping An (China), Generali (Europe), Sumitomo (Japan), John Hancock (US), Manulife (Canada) and Vitality Life & Health (UK, wholly owned). Discovery trades on the Johannesburg Securities Exchange as DSY.

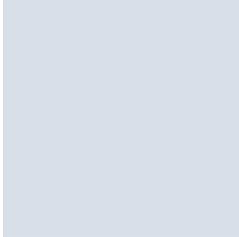
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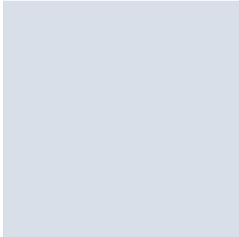
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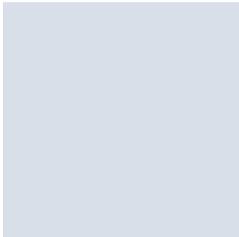
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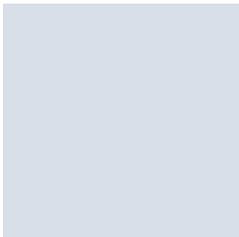
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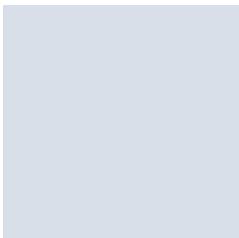
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