

# POPULATION LEVEL INTERVENTIONS TARGETING RISK FACTORS FOR DIABETES AND HYPERTENSION IN SOUTH AFRICA: MOVING FROM POLICY INTO ACTION

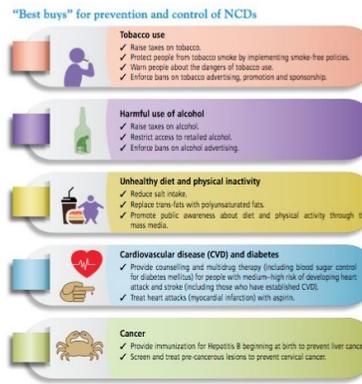


## Burden of NCDs in South Africa

In 2013, the SA government committed to reduce, by at least 25%, the relative premature mortality (under 60 years of age) from NCDs by 2020 through its strategic plan for NCDs<sup>1</sup>. This can be achieved through various population-level interventions. The WHO recommend the implementation of ‘Best buys’<sup>2</sup> interventions to address NCDs mortality and morbidities by addressing modifiable risk factors for CVD and diabetes such as poor diet, physical inactivity, smoking and alcohol consumption and excess body weight.

## Implementation of population-level interventions in South Africa.

The NCD Countdown 2030 report shows that South Africa is one of the countries that could fail to reach the United Nation’s goal to lessen the burden of NCDs by 2030. Hence, there is a need to accelerate the implementation of WHO Best buys to achieve the United Nation’s goal to lessen NCDs by 2030.



A desk review was conducted in 2019-2020 to take stock of population level interventions targeting risk factors of diabetes and hypertension<sup>3</sup>. The South African government has made progress in formulating policies and designing programs addressing population level-interventions as per WHO ‘Best buys’.

A qualitative study<sup>4</sup> using key informant interviews was then done to identify and understand challenges and enablers for implementation of WHO best buys for risk factors of diabetes and hypertension in South Africa. A triangulation approach for analysis of both document review and qualitative data was used.

## PRIORITY ACTIONS for NDoH

**1** Establish a multi-sectoral structure from national to community governance structures to coordinate, monitor and evaluate WHO Best buys interventions.

**2** Allocate adequate funding to support effective implementation of WHO ‘Best buys’ interventions from province, district and community levels.

**3** Develop a comprehensive M&E system to support systematic documentation and evaluation of the WHO Best buys interventions based on contextual issues and environments in which their being implemented.



# NCD Countdown 2030

## KEY FINDINGS

1. There are a **plethora of policies, regulations and programs** targeting major risk factors for diabetes and hypertension implemented in line with WHO 'Best buys' interventions since 1994 (post-apartheid era).

### 2. Enabling factors:

- multi-sectoral collaboration engagement;
- community ownership & empowerment;
- building partnerships for co-creation of enabling environments;
- leveraging existing infrastructure of other health programs;
- contextualisation of policies & programs;
- community driven activism;
- political will and leadership.

### 3. Challenges hampering implementation:

- upstream policy implementation processes (eg competing interests)
- lack of balance between economic vs health gains
- limited funding for population-based interventions and NCDs prevention policies and programs

## IMPLICATIONS

### ➤ Inter-sectoral Engagement

There is a **need for engagement of stakeholders** from all levels of policy making, prevention, and management from the onset of the planning stages to ensure appropriate and effective implementation of WHO Best buys interventions (i.e. Supportive policies, programs and enabling environments addressing risk factors for NCDs).

### ➤ Coordination and M&E structure

A **functional multi-sectoral structure is needed** to ensure good coordination and monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the WHO Best buys interventions in order to achieve the UN goal to lessen NCDs by 2030.

### ➤ Allocation of funding

The SA government to dedicate resources and investment to **support coordinated implementation** as well as monitoring and impact evaluation of NCDs interventions particularly at provincial, district and community levels.

#### References

<sup>1</sup>National Department of Health. National strategic plan for the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases 2020-2025 (Draft Document). [https://www.sanccda.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/17-May-2020-South-Africa-NCD-STRATEGIC-PLAN\\_For-Circulation.pdf](https://www.sanccda.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/17-May-2020-South-Africa-NCD-STRATEGIC-PLAN_For-Circulation.pdf).

<sup>2</sup>World Health Organization. From Burden to "Best Buys": Reducing the Economic Impact of Non-Communicable Diseases in Low- and Middle-Income Countries. World Health Organisation. 2011. <http://www.weforum.org/EconomicsOFNCD>

<sup>3</sup>Uwimana Nicol J, Hendricks L and Young T. Implementation of population-based interventions targeting risk factors for diabetes and hypertension in South Africa: A document review. BMC Public Health 2021; 21:2283. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-021-11910-6>

<sup>4</sup>Uwimana Nicol J, Hendricks L, Young T. Challenges and enablers for implementation of WHO Best buy interventions targeting risk factors of diabetes and hypertension in South Africa: A mixed-methods study. PAMJ (accepted)

Best Buys Picture source:

<https://twitter.com/georgeinstitute/status/1044362651940335616?lang=zh-Hant>



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