

# Strengthening mortality surveillance during COVID-19



WC Department of Health with the SAMRC is trying to find out the cause of deaths (from illness not injuries) that happen at home.



If your relative died at home, you will be contacted by WCDoH to arrange a phone interview.



You will be interviewed by phone to find out how and why your relative died.



Your interviewer will explain the process and get your consent before proceeding with the interview. You are free to refuse to take part at any time.



This project will help improve information on what causes deaths in the City of Cape Town.



You will receive a R100 shopping voucher to cover your time.

*The project team will contact you to ask about how and why your loved one died.*

The Western Cape Department of Health with the South African Medical Research Council is trying to find out what people who die outside a hospital are dying from. To do this, we need to interview close family members or care givers of people who died at home. We plan to interview the family members of about 600 people who recently died from an illness (not an injury) at home or on the way to hospital.

Please feel free to call **Dr Pam Groenewald (021 938 0555)** or **Dr Ian Neethling (021 938 0957)** if you need any more information



# Strengthening Mortality Surveillance (SMS) for improved monitoring of HIV/AIDS, TB and COVID-19 in South Africa

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## Information sheet for next-of-kin

### What is this about

The SAMRC and WCDoH are trying to find out if you want to participate in the project “Strengthening Mortality Surveillance (SMS) for improved monitoring of HIV/AIDS, TB in and COVID-19 in South Africa”. This project is being sponsored by the South Africa Medical Research Council.

### Why and how are we doing this study

We are asking about 600 – 800 families of someone that died recently to tell us what happened that led to the death. We are doing this in Western Cape. We are doing this study to find out how and why people die. We also want to know if its ok to ask people about the death of their family members death over the phone.

We will ask you to tell the story about the death of your relative and also ask you some questions about what happened over the telephone. This should last no longer than an hour. Some people who answered questions about the death will be called back and asked to tell us how they felt about the whole experience and about answering questions over the telephone (TeleVA).

### Being part of the study and stopping the study

If you agree to take part in this study, we will ask you questions. You do not have to answer all the questions. At any time during the questions you can refuse to participate or ask us to stop. We will then stop. If you do not want to take part in this project you do not have to. The information about your loved one's death will not be changed if you take part or if you do not.

### Keeping information private

Your answers to the questions will be entered into a tablet. Your name will not be written down when you answer the questions. Only a code will be linked to your answers. This code is called a unique study identity number (USID) and is the same as the USID allocated to your deceased relative. All of your answers will be kept private.

As the study sponsor, CDC may monitor or audit project activities. The reason for this would be to make sure that

the project is being done the way it is supposed to be done. It would also make sure that your rights and health are protected. Your personal information and your loved one's medical information will be kept confidential.

Your answers will not be shared with anyone other than the research team and will be kept safe. This means that no one will know the information came from you. We will protect your information. Your name will not appear in any report on this project. All of your answers will remain private and will not be shared with anyone, except in the form of anonymous quotations, or described in a publication or report.

### Benefits/Risks

Apart from a shopping voucher of R100.00 to compensate you for your time there will be no direct benefit to you from the project. But, you will help us find out if phone calls to discuss death can be used to get better information and are ok to do. There are few risks to you taking part in this project. It is possible that you could become emotional while speaking about the death of a family member. Our staff are trained for this and to refer you to trained professionals if you want.

### Payment

Participation in this project is your choice. You will receive a shopping voucher of R100.00, provided to all people taking part in the project, to allow us to talk with you. You will not receive any money or food for being part of the study. You do not have to pay to be in the study.

### Other information

The Ethics Committees of the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC) and SwissTPH who are responsible for keeping the people who take part in a project safe have said that the project can go ahead. The work will follow the rules set out in the Department of Health: Ethics in health research: principles, processes and structures, second edition, 2015 and the Declaration of Helsinki (2013). The Western Cape Department of Health is collaborating in this study.

### Contact details

Please feel free to call Dr Pam Groenewald (082 5330000 or 021 9380555) or Dr Ian Neethling (021 938 0957) if you have any questions or need grief support. You may also contact the SAMRC Ethics Committee if there are any questions or problems. Contact details of the Chairperson: Prof Danie du Toit (telephone 021 938 0687; email adri.labuschagne@mrc.ac.za). These contact details will also be sent to you by SMS if you participate.