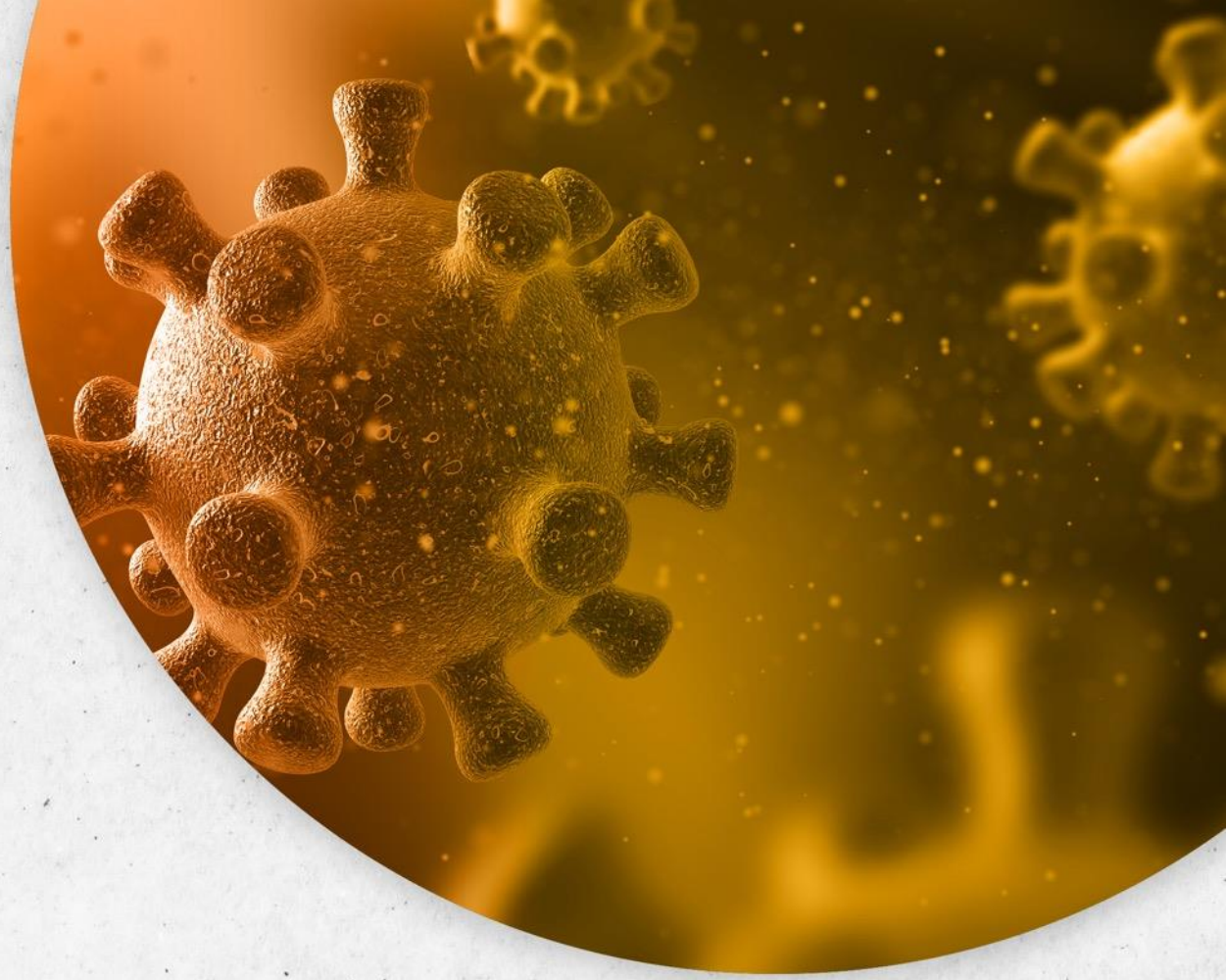
South African Government Women's Empowerment and Gender Equity



Responses to COVID-19

LET'S GROW SOUTH AFRICA TOGETHER

planning, monitoring & evaluation
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NRF National Research Foundation

2030 NDP

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Overview of Chapter

- Gender-specific interventions & protection implemented to mitigate impact of the crisis on women & children
- Explores the extent to which the interventions implemented were responsive to gender-specific concerns of women, children and vulnerable groups
- Assesses the extent to which women accessed services during the different lockdown phases
- Analysis of regulations & secondary analysis of various datasets
- DPME – organised key informant interviews were conducted with DGs of various departments.
- Textual content from the interviews used to shed light on interventions

Background

- Global context: recognition of women as most oppressed social category has entrenched UN's focus on gender equality & women's empowerment
- South Africa -gender equality is inscribed in the Constitution
- Women's empowerment is a policy imperative-decades of racism & sexism
- Sectoral policies & programmes reflect concerns during COVID-19 lockdown
- Gaps exist in regulations & some interventions
- Lessons for policy & practice

Theoretical & conceptual framework

- Gender & Development (GAD)– differences btwn men & women-race, class, ethnicity, sexuality etc.
- Who (men & women) benefits from development programmes/interventions by State & other stakeholders- outcomes of development interventions
- Women - which women benefit? Women not homogenous; differences
- Covid-19 interventions– who benefitted; which women?
- Intersectionality - Homogenous approach- overlooks differences among women
- Women cannot be considered from the singular lens of gender- must be viewed in terms of race too

Intersectionality

- Race interacts in complex ways with gender to amplify the disadvantage of Black women
- South Africa- Race intersects with gender to amplify poverty & inequality in context of covid-19
- GAD & intersectionality valuable in exploring effect of state interventions on women during covid-19
- Gendering policies, programmes & regulations implies addressing strategic gender needs
- Healthcare, education, income, housing and public transportation, protection from sexual violence, & action against the feminisation of poverty

Gender responsive policies & interventions

- Include the redistribution of resources & access to public services for the care of children, disabled persons, & the elderly
- Without support, women carry the burden of care
- Gender equality - equal access to opportunities for both men & women, so all participate in every sector of society & the economy without barriers
- Gender equity is about fairness
- Requires state intervention so that historically disadvantaged individuals can compete on the same terms as the privileged
- Equity results in equality

FINDINGS

Gender analysis of regulations

Gender-based violence

Maternal & Child health

Human settlements

Recommendations

Gender analysis of regulations

- March – national disaster declared.
- Regulations -enable nation navigate the epidemic of disease & fear
- Fear that accompanied the media reports on the Covid-19 pandemic was extraordinary both locally & and across the globe
- Regulations were necessary but some gaps emerged in implementation
- Regulations -not all gender-sensitive & supportive of vulnerable groups
- Principles of equality, non-discrimination, human rights & respect of human dignity should have been considered & applied in the design & implementation of regulations

Gender analysis of regulations

- Stigma - the requirement for self-isolation & quarantine & how those who perished from the epidemic were buried aggravated the stigma around COVID-19
- Essential items
- Education
- Communication
- Unpaid work
- Working from home (wfh)
- Practical & strategic needs of women should have been considered in lockdown regulations

Gender analysis of regulations

- DTI –22 categories of items that the National Consumer and Competition Commission would monitor to guard against unjustified price increases
- Basic groceries & food items (e.g. rice, maize meal, milk, canned vegetables and meats), personal care products (e.g. toilet paper, baby formula and nappies), hygiene products (e.g. disinfectant, hand sanitiser and cleaning agents) and key medical supplies (e.g. surgical masks and gloves).
- Regulations overlooked some practical needs – clothing for babies, toddlers & maternity items
- CGE intervention allowed the sale of clothing for babies & toddlers

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Defining Gender Based Violence

- Gender-Based Violence (GBV):

- The general term used to capture ***violence*** that occurs as a result of the normative role expectations associated with the **gender associated with the sex assigned to a person at birth**, as well as the ***unequal power relations*** between the genders, within the context of a specific society.

- GBV includes physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, and psychological abuse or threats of such acts or abuse, coercion, and **economic or educational deprivation**, whether occurring in public or private life, in peacetime and during armed or other forms of conflict, and may cause physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or economic harm.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND INTIMATE PARTNER FEMICIDE

- April-June 2019/2020 - **20 775** and **32 883** in 2020/2021 (domestic violence)
- Statistics increase as the lockdown levels decrease (both intimate partner femicide and domestic violence)
- Perpetrators remain boyfriend, husbands, partners
- Perpetrators – increasingly brothers and police-officers
-

GBV Against LGBTIQ+

- NPO'S provided services during lockdown, mostly but not exclusively **online.**
- **Family violence against transgender women:** Often transgender women need to be moved out of their homes to ensure their safety.
- Harder to move transgender women during lockdown, due to COVID-19 protocols & isolation challenges
- **The SAPS and gender-based violence: -**little implementation of the Standard Operating Procedure on the **Detention of Transgender Persons in Conflict with the Law.**
- Robyn Montsumi was a sex worker who died in police custody during lockdown in June 2020 (Grobler, 2020).
- NGOs lodged a complaint about her case with the **Human Rights Commission**; an investigation has been promised but has not been forthcoming (Human, 2020). Another case of a transgender women raped in police custody during lockdown has been taken up by **Lawyers for Human Rights**.

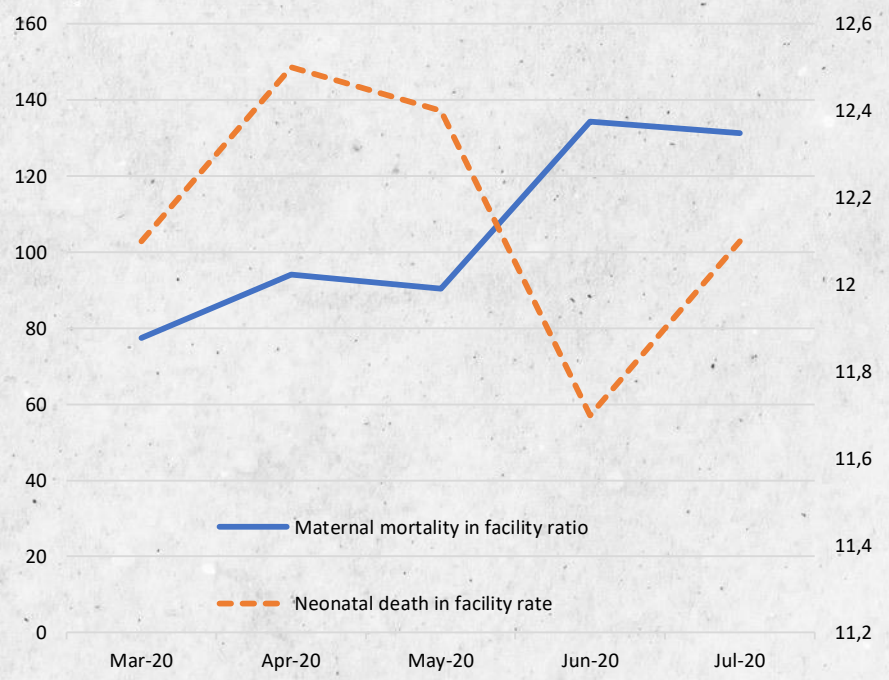
MATERNAL & CHILD HEALTH

ACCESS TO MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH SERVICES

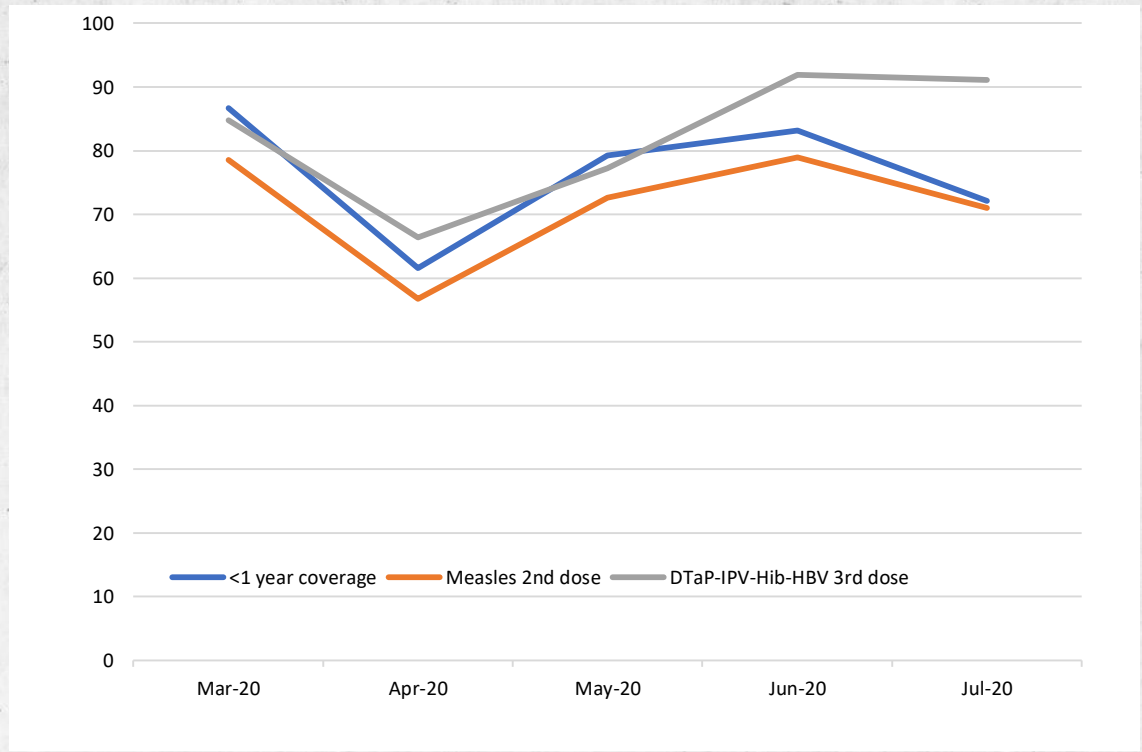
Stage Indicator	May-July 2020	Comparison
PRE-PREGNANCY –aggregate Couple Year Protection rate (CYP)	↓ (51% to 31.8 in April)	60%-68% 2014-18
ANTENATAL VISITS- 1st visit before 20 weeks (%)	↔ (69.7% to 66.5% in May, recovered around 69%)	~69%
DELIVERY AND POST NATAL VISIT		
Deliveries and births at facilities (#s)	↓ (Lowest in May & July)	n/a
Mother postnatal visit within 6 days (%)	☺ (79.5 to 83.5%)	80% +
Delivery by caesarean section (%)	↑ (29-32.4%)	 22-26%

Maternal & Neonatal Mortality AND Infant Immunisation

- Maternal and Neonatal Mortality



- Infant Immunisation



Gauteng case study

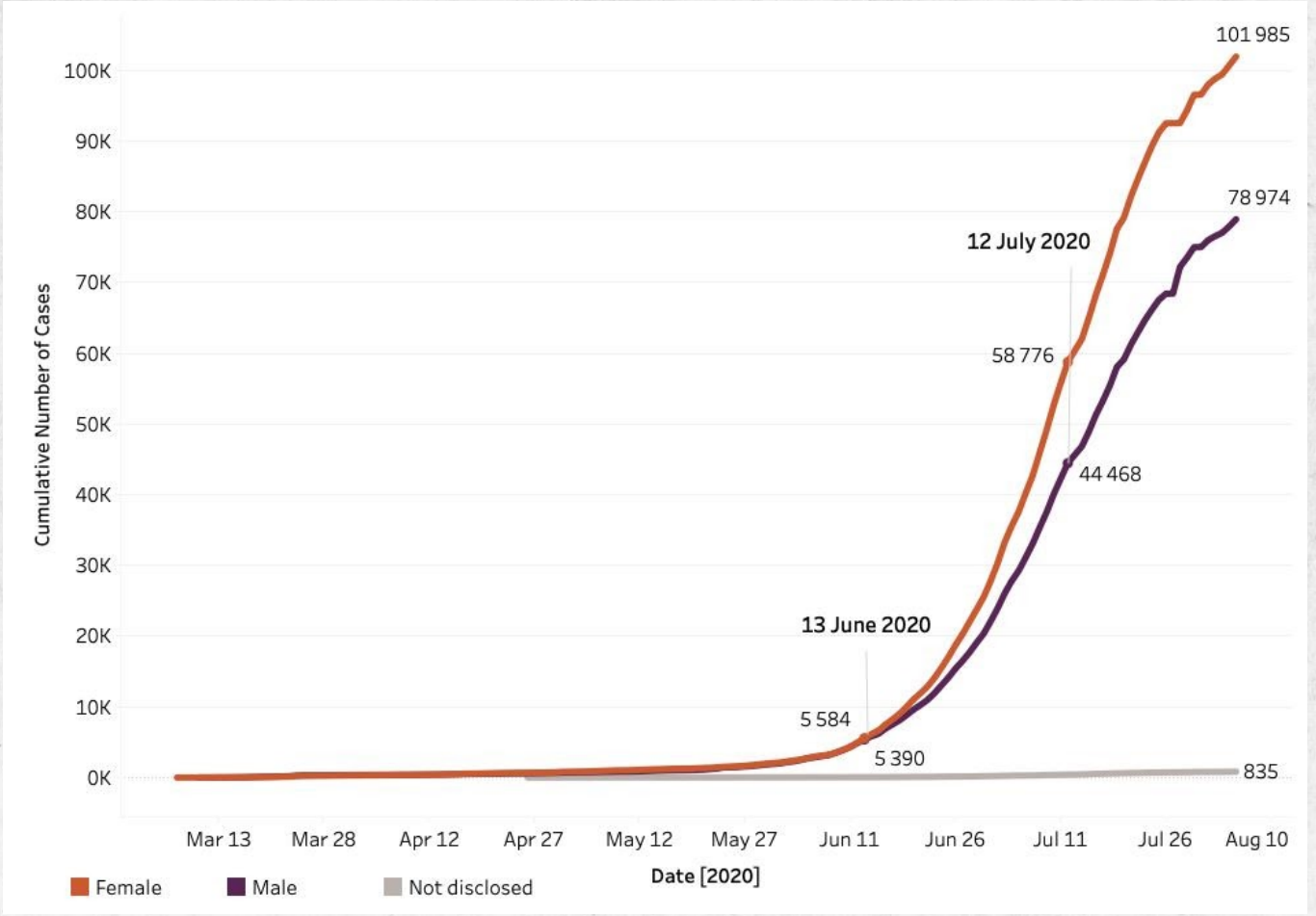
More women (56%) than men are testing positive for COVID-19 and this gender gap started and widen from lock down level 3

As of 11 August 2020 - 23 011 more women than men had tested positive

This ratio has remained fairly consistent from March until October 2020

The gender split for the population in Gauteng is even (50% women to 50% men according to 2020 population estimates from StatsSA)

Internationally, there are more females cases than male cases in developed countries, reverse in developing nations. Global male to female breakdowns of cases can be found here: https://data.unwomen.org/resources/covid-19-emerging-gender-data-and-why-it-matters



** Mpilo data as per 11 August*

Gauteng case study

Testing data for South Africa shows that a similarly higher proportion of women (56%) are being tested for COVID-19 and a slightly higher proportion of women are testing positive (59%) (based on week 32 data) (NICD, 2020).

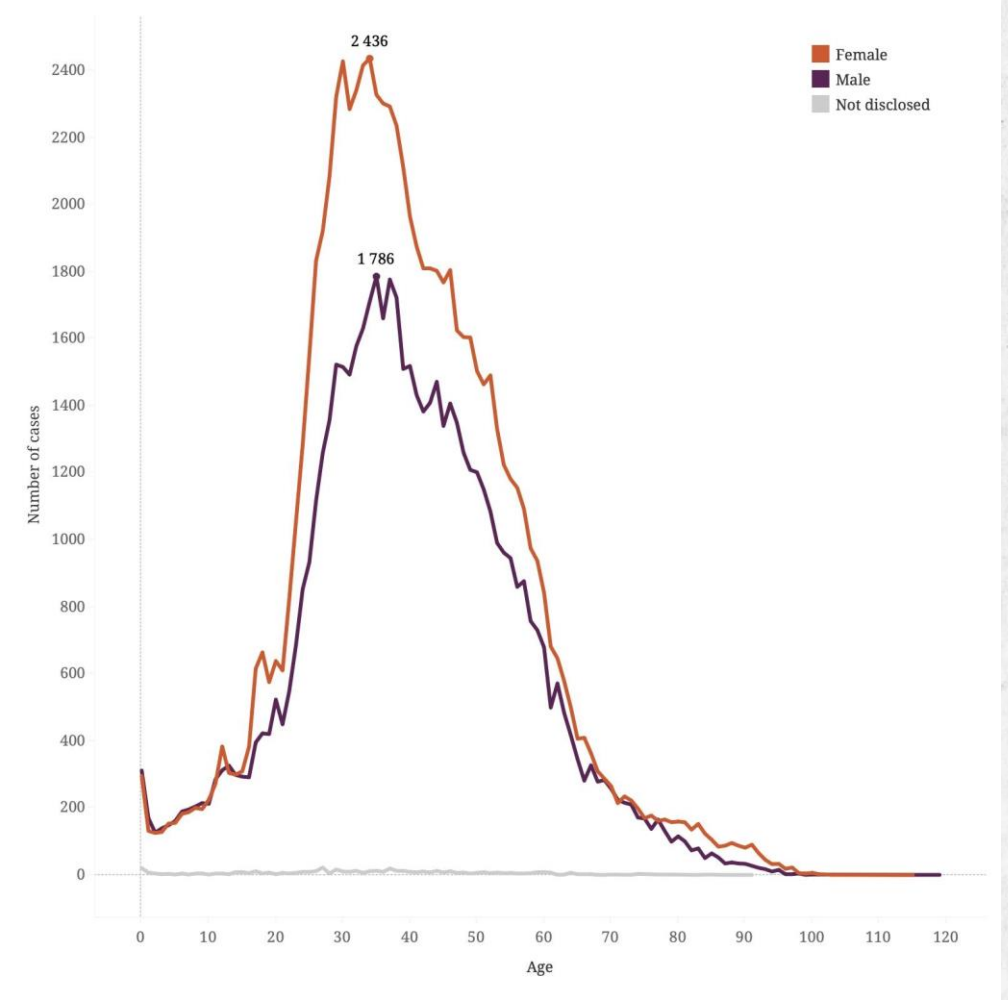
Women may be testing more than men for a number of reasons:

1) as part of pre- and post-natal care they may be having routine tests;

(2) women who experience symptoms may be better at seeking care or testing;

(3) women may be experiencing symptoms at a greater rate for various reasons; and

(4) Globally, some 70% of healthcare workers are female driving a higher rate of female tests and infection cases.

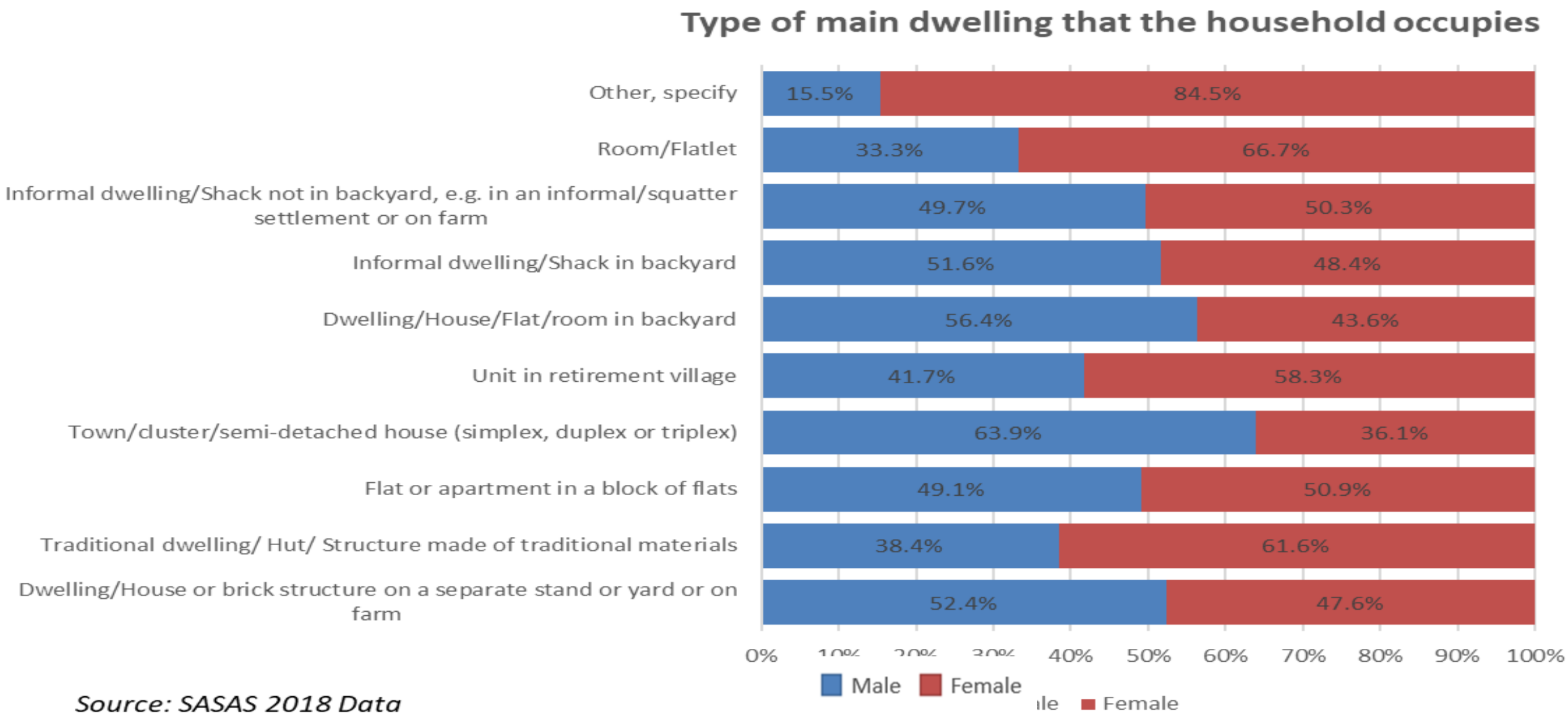


** Mpilo data as per 11 August*

- Women are more likely to live in larger households so there is an increased risk of intrahousehold transmission
- Larger households are associated with a lower quality of life and are more likely to have resource constraints
- Net job losses between February and April were higher for women than for men, with women accounting for two-thirds of the total net job losses.
- **Presents a double burden on women - an increased risk of infection as well as an increased risk of socio-economic impacts.**

HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

Housing Typologies



Source: SASAS 2018 Data

Source: Weighted SASAS 2018, 16 Yrs +

- Women's role in the home is eased/hampered by inadequate shelter, infrastructure, and services.

- women represented & overrepresented in housing typologies with poor conditions:
  - Rooms- 66.7%;
  - Traditional dwellings (61.6%);
  - Informal settlements (50.3%);
  - Informal dwellings/Shacks (48.3%)
  - Flat/apartment (50.9%) & Brick structure on separate stand (47.3%) & Other (84%) (SASAS, 2018).

    - Typologies - mask overcrowding, lack of services & insecurity,

Effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on Women in different housing settings:

- Housing conditions exacerbated vulnerability to the pandemic.

Examples:

1. **Women in Hostels**:overcrowding, poor sanitation and services; lack of security enforced on women and girls for longer hours due to lockdown.
   - Vulnerability to COVID-19 infection as a function of living (and transportation) conditions.
2. **Women in informal Settlements and Dwellings**:
   - ❑Urban informal areas have the largest share of very poor households
   - ❑African and coloured women are overrepresented in informal settlements
   - ❑protected from eviction by regulations preventing same, others were evicted

Domestic Workers: Domestic work accounts for 15% of women's employment (Kannemeyer et al., 2020).

- About 95% of domestic workers are women (Stats SA, 2017); live in poor housing conditions
- 63% earned more than R2 500 per month before the pandemic, 74% earned less than this in the lockdown (Sweepsouth, 2020).
- 69% could not afford to pay their rent during lockdown:-
  - 57% fell (further) behind with their rent payments;
  - 8% borrowed money for rent;
  - 4% moved to cheaper accommodation. Most did not know how they would cover rental arrears (Kannemeyer et al., 2020).

HOWEVER:

- 75% of South African domestic workers reported that a household member received some form of grant(e.g., older person or child support during the pandemic.
- 87% had their normal grants increased or received some special Covid-19-related benefit.
- Only 4% of migrant domestic workers reported government support (Kannemeyer et al., 2020).

4. **Refugee and migrant women**: Group exhibits many of the indicators of vulnerability including (Stats SA, 2020) :

    - Some women may have benefitted regulations that prevented eviction & demolition of dwellings;others victimised anyway.

Affordability of Homeloans

- Disaggregated data unavailable.
- The four big banks offered loan payment relief for three months.
  - Relief selective – households not already in arrears and earning only up to a certain income.
  - potentially exclusive of vulnerable homeowners, many of whom are women.
  - Women may have been forced to take the payment ‘holiday’
  - Women tend to earn less and were worse affected by the lockdown.

Government response to housing needs

- Fast-tracking of housing allocation e.g. Khutong informal settlements, 1500 households approved for relocation to newly constructed units by June 2020 (Sisulu, 2020).
- De-densification of Hostels: 1000 temporary residential units (TRUs) constructed to de-densify households living at the Mamelodi hostels
- 70 units built in 3 weeks for victims of farm evictions
- 2020/21 the HDA delivered 8000 housing units using alternative technology.

- Government allocated R4.6 billion for upgrading of informal settlements
- R831 million for the provision of Emergency Response Housing for women, children, and the elderly (Sisulu, 2020).
- R600 million -relief to social housing tenants that could not afford to pay rent due to COVID 19

Recommendations

- Without gender-mainstreaming in interventions women's empowerment & gender equality cannot be achieved in the context of COVID-19

- Disaster policies, regulations and interventions need to be gender-responsive to ensure that gender empowerment and equality

Development of a system of removal of alleged/offender from shared residence

- Data sets should be disaggregated into gender and race & where data is unavailable, rapid studies should be funded

- Residential data needs to include more variables e.g. forms of tenure
- Partnerships between state, banks and private landlords are critical to ensure vulnerable tenants are protected from evictions during disasters like COVID-19

Conclusions:

1. Engender policies & regulations
2. Intersectionality is critical to understanding vulnerability of marginalized groups in South Africa
3. Data disaggregation into gender and race is critical to understanding the gendered impact of COVID-19 on