Knowledge of NCDs does not translate into healthy lifestyle behaviours: Implications for health communication

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[1] Genesis Analytics, [2] HEALA, [3] Vital Strategies

Background

South Africa has the highest obesity rate in Sub-Saharan Africa

OBESE OR OVERWEIGHT

39%

69.3%
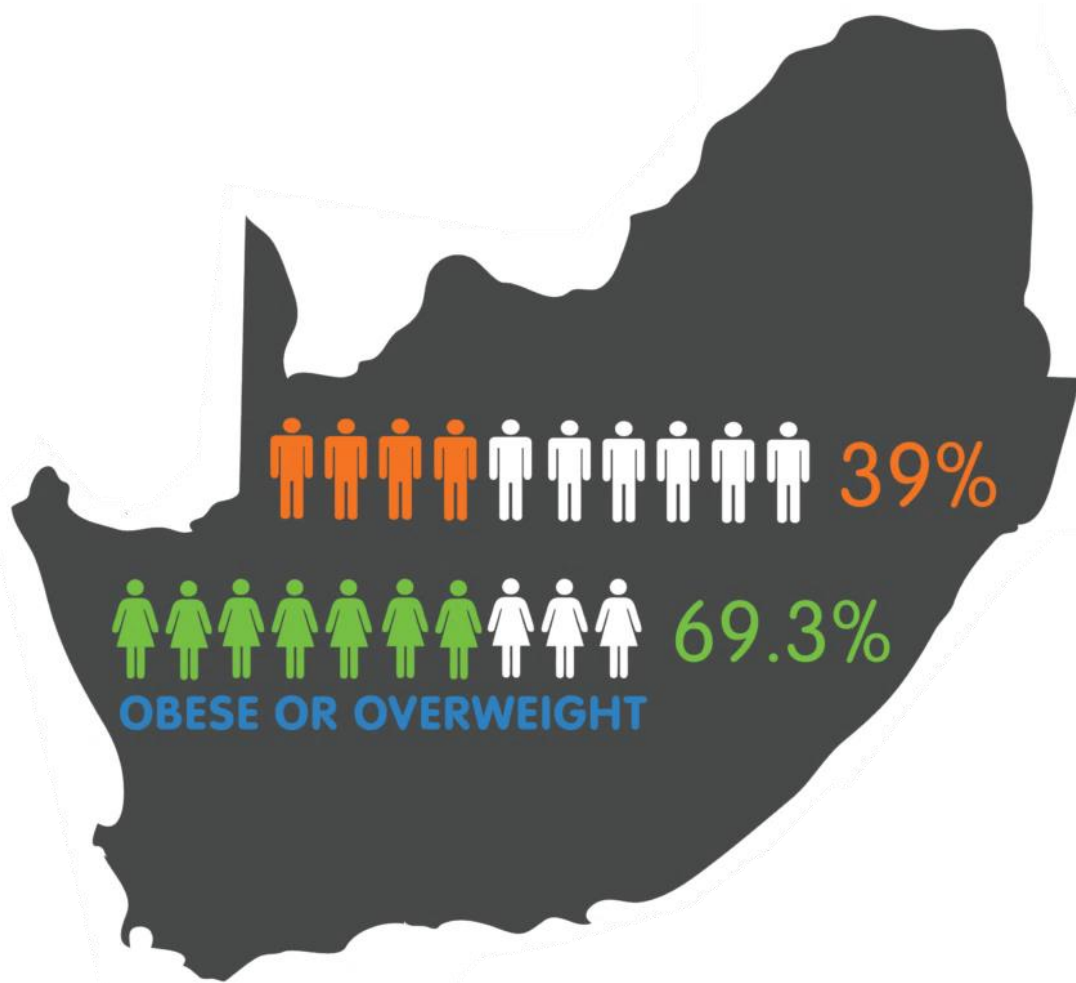
Obesity related diseases account for almost 43% of deaths in SA

Leading causes of death in SA:

1. Tuberculosis
2. **Diabetes**
3. **Cerebrovascular diseases**
4. **Other forms of heart diseases[1]**
5. HIV
6. Influenza and pneumonia
7. **Hypertension**
8. Other viral diseases
9. Chronic lower respiratory disease
10. **Ischaemic heart disease**

[1]Other than cerebrovascular causes
Source: Stats SA, 2015

HEALA
Healthy Living Alliance

For a full list of references visit www.heala.org

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Defining overweight and obesity in adults

- BMI is a measure of body fat, based on height and weight.

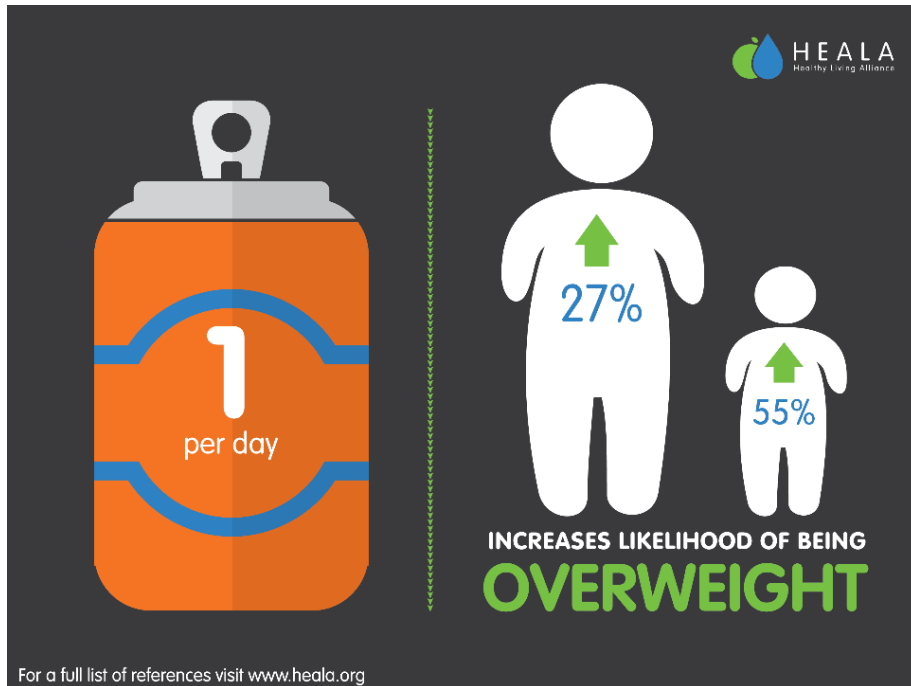$$\text{Body Mass Index (BMI)} = \frac{\text{weight (kg)}}{[\text{height (m)}]^2}$$

- Used to classify adult overweight and obesity.

- Best measure in the absence of anthropometric measurements.

- Internationally accepted standard.

Body Mass Index

Men

Underweight	Healthy weight	Overweight	Obese
<18.5	18.5-24.9	25.0-29.9	>30.0
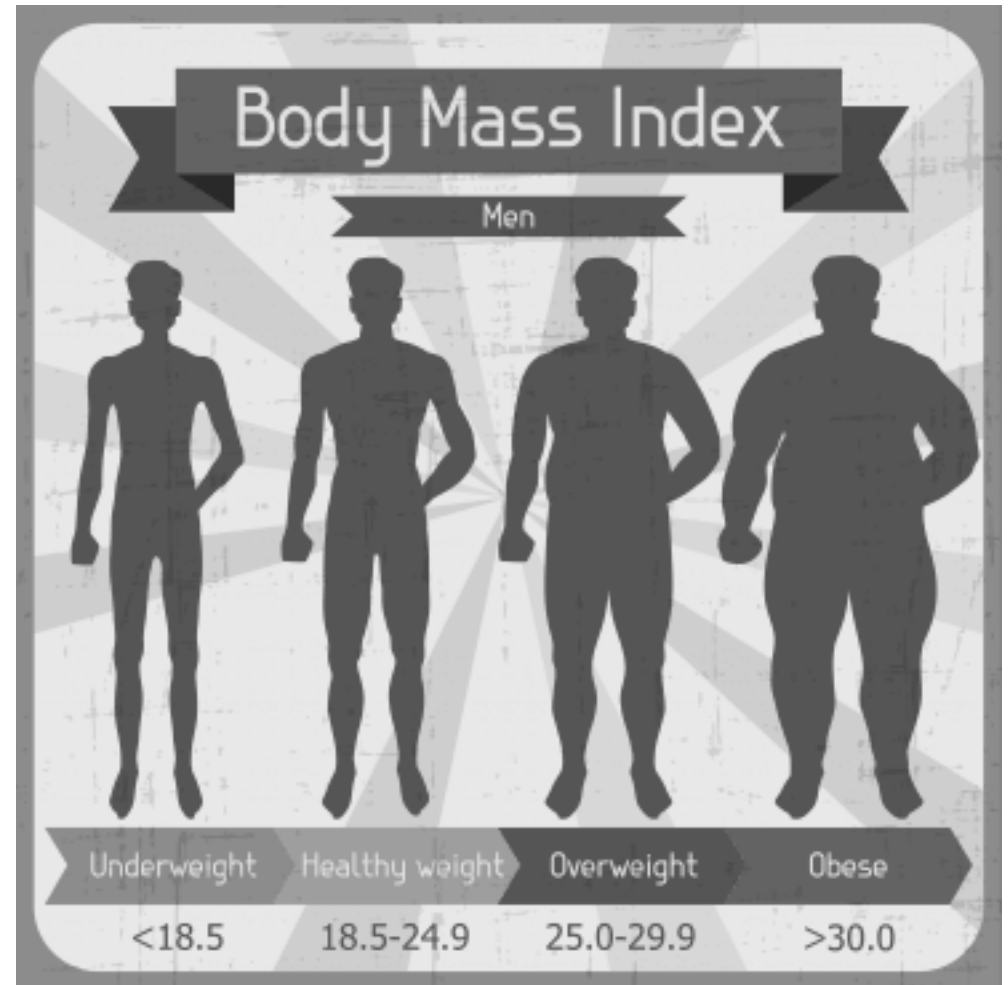
Vital Strategies and its partners aim to reduce obesity through the development and delivery of high-impact interventions

HEALA's "Are you drinking yourself sick?" campaign aims to:
1) reduce sugary drink consumption 2) gain support for sugar tax

Genesis Analytics conducted a baseline survey prior to campaign launch in October 2016

Baseline survey assessed:

1) Knowledge about the burden and risk factors for NCDs

2) Prevalence of healthy lifestyle behaviours

3) Attitudes / perceptions around the SSB tax

Methods

Study Methods

- Interviewed 1000 participants aged 18 – 55 years
- Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Western Cape (metros and cities)

Participant randomisation:
- Geographic framework sampling (Nielson GeoFrame)
- Politz grids to randomly select one respondent per household

- Analysis conducted in STATA v14
- Data weighted to represent the population
- Reporting on frequencies and percentages

Sample Description

Sample description

	Unweighted, n (%)	Weighted, n (%)
Total	n = 1 000	n = 11 719 512
Sex		
Male	499 (49.9%)	5 863 751 (50.03%)
Female	501 (50.0%)	5 855 761 (49.97%)
Age		
18-29	389 (38.9%)	4 402 568 (37.6%)
30-49	470 (47.0%)	5 760 053 (49.2%)
50-55	141 (14.1%)	1 556 891 (13.3%)
Education		
Primary school completed	35 (3.5%)	376 809 (3.2%)
High school completed	268 (26.8%)	2 817 331 (24.0%)
Degree/Diploma completed	553 (55.3%)	6 513 810 (55.6%)
Postgraduate completed	120 (12.0%)	1 708 710 (14.6%)
Don't know	24 (2.4%)	302 852 (2.6%)

Sample description

	Unweighted, n (%)	Weighted, n (%)
Employment		
Unemployed	368 (36.8%)	4 064 995 (34.7%)
Employed	502 (50.2%)	6 105 183 (52.1%)
Student	42 (4.2%)	494 476 (4.2%)
Other	88 (8.8%)	1 054 858 (9.0%)
Marital Status		
Single	512 (51.2%)	5 669 292 (48.4%)
Married	281 (28.1%)	3 815 549 (32.6%)
Separated	20 (2.0%)	232 692 (2.0%)
Divorced	16 (1.6%)	177 022 (1.5%)
Widowed	25 (2.5%)	237 761 (2.0%)
Living together	146 (14.6%)	1 587 196 (13.5%)

Knowledge

Knowledge of risks of overweight and obesity

86% Believe there is a link between being overweight/obese and **the risk of serious illness for *adults*** [1]
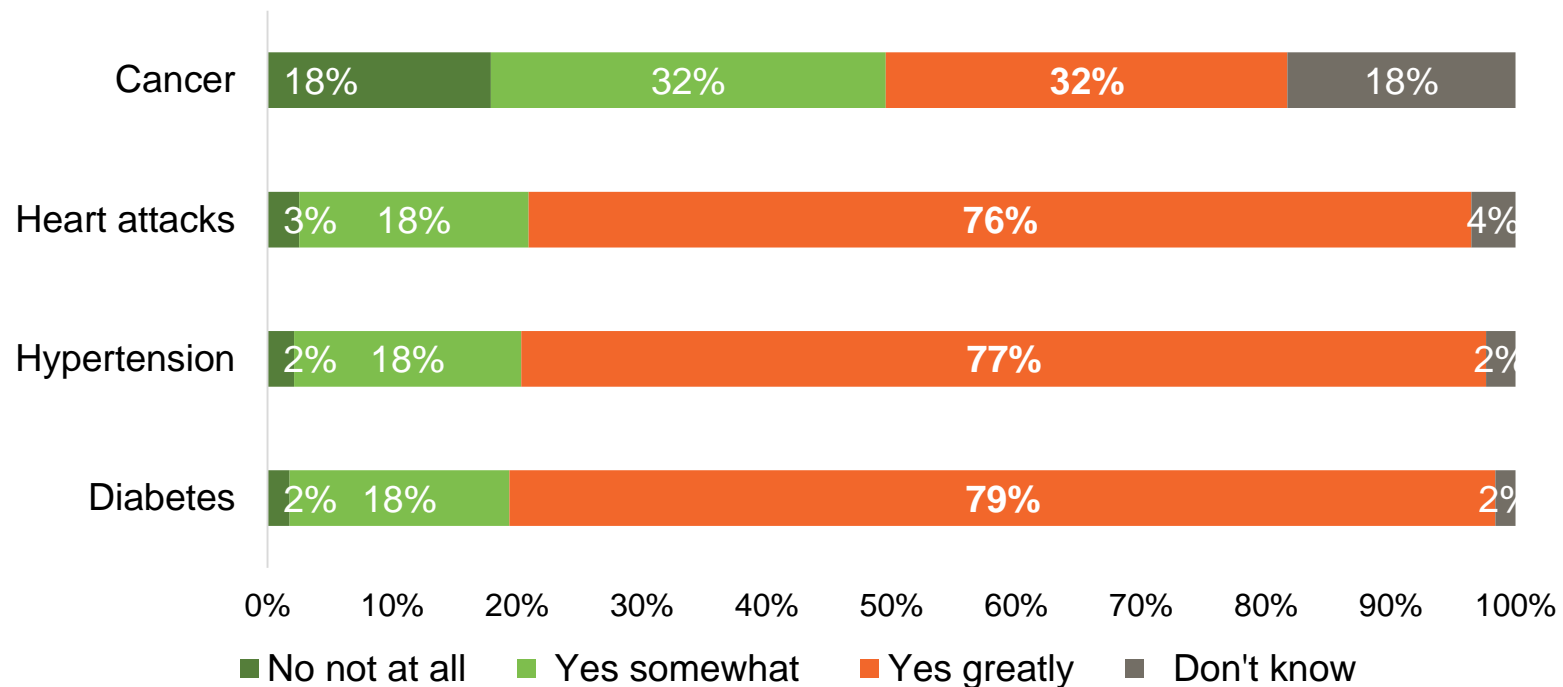
76% Believe there is a link between being overweight/obese and **the risk of serious illness for *children*** [2]

[1] 53% stated "extremely" and 34% stated "very much"; [2] 42% stated "extremely" and 34% stated "very much"

n = 1 000

Knowledge of risks of overweight and obesity

Does being overweight or obese increase the risk of...?

Category	No not at all	Yes somewhat	Yes greatly	Don't know
Cancer	18%	32%	32%	18%
Heart attacks	3%	18%	76%	4%
Hypertension	2%	18%	77%	2%
Diabetes	2%	18%	79%	2%

■ No not at all ■ Yes somewhat ■ Yes greatly ■ Don't know

>75% understood the resulting risk of diabetes, hypertension, and heart attacks

>30% knew that overweight / obesity greatly increases the risk of cancer

Perception of NCDs as a problem in South Africa

How much of a problem, if at all, are the following in your country?

Category	Not at all	Somewhat of a problem	Moderate	Very Much	A lot
Oral health	5%	18%	29%	34%	15%
Undernutrition	5%	16%	25%	31%	24%
Cancer	8%	14%	20%	31%	27%
Overweight or obesity in children		13%	25%	38%	23%
Overweight or obesity in adults		9%	17%	37%	35%
Heart disease		8%	18%	38%	35%
Diabetes		8%	14%	32%	45%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Legend: ■ Not at all ■ Somewhat of a problem ■ Moderate ■ Very Much ■ A lot
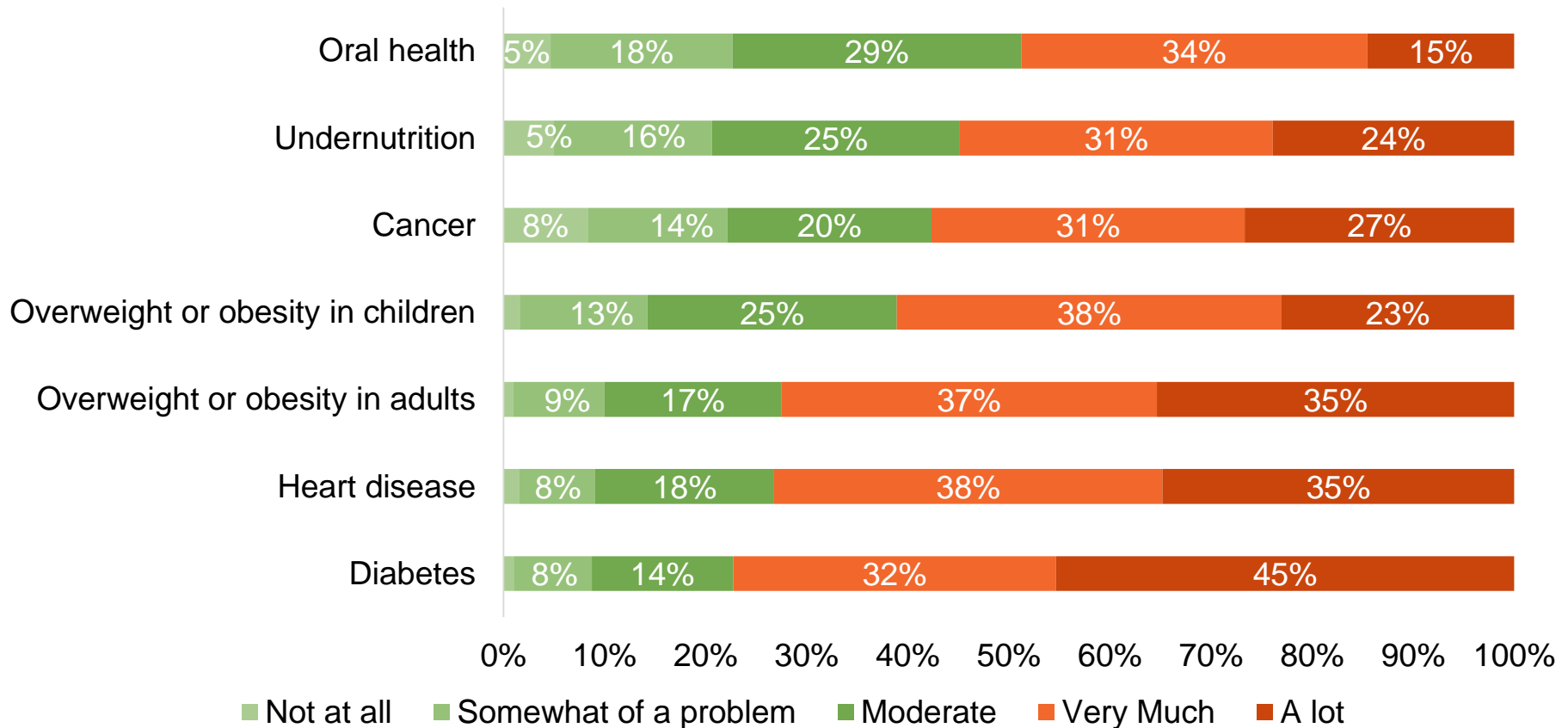
Most considered NCDs to be a problem in South Africa

n = 1 000

Knowledge of causes of obesity

What are the three biggest causes of obesity? (spontaneous mention)

Bar chart:
- Eating junk food: 92%
- Genetic disposition: 80%
- Drinking sugary drinks: 76%
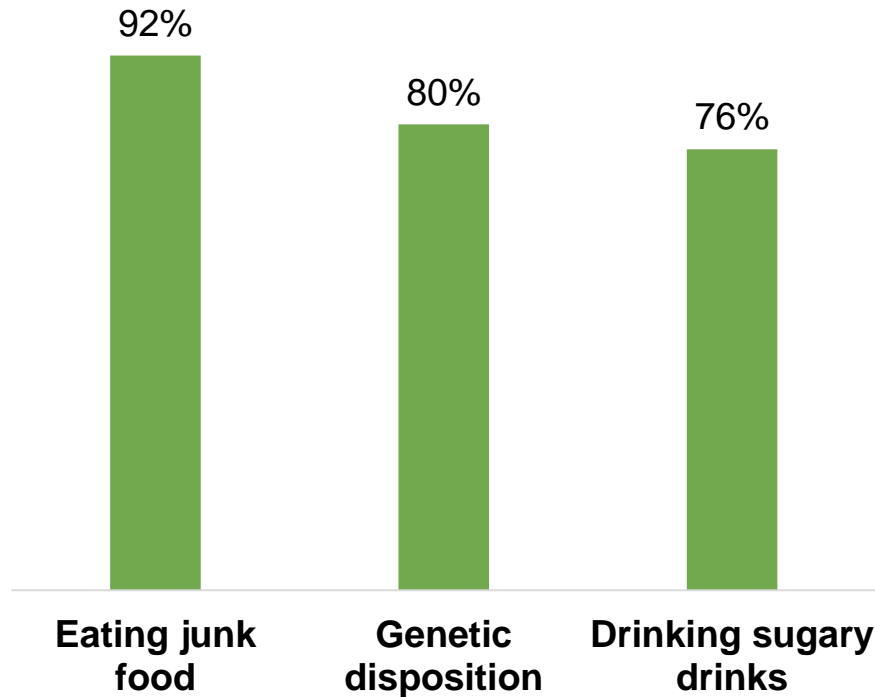
Other factors identified:

- Lack of exercise (36.3%)
- Alcohol (1.2%)
- Eating too much (0.9%)
- Stress (0.9%)
- Sleeping too much (0.5%)
- Health conditions (0.3%)
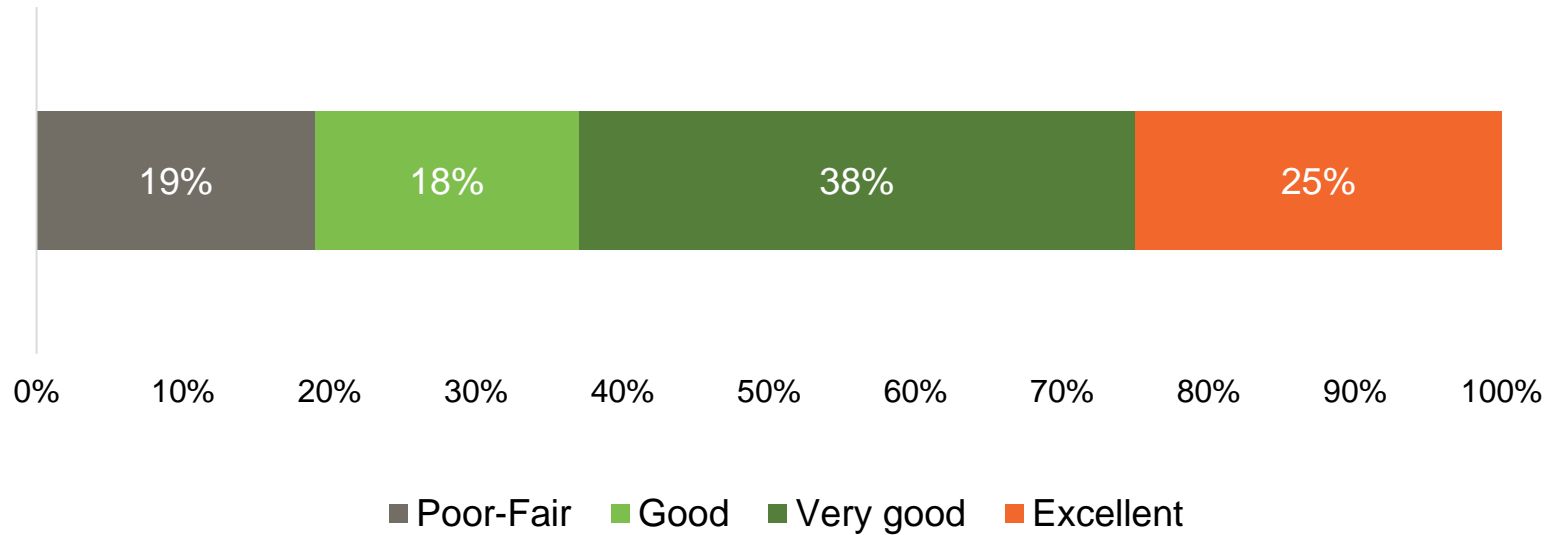- Lack of water (0.3%)
- Smoking (0.1%)

High knowledge on the link between poor nutrition and obesity

n = 1 000

Overall Health

Overall health

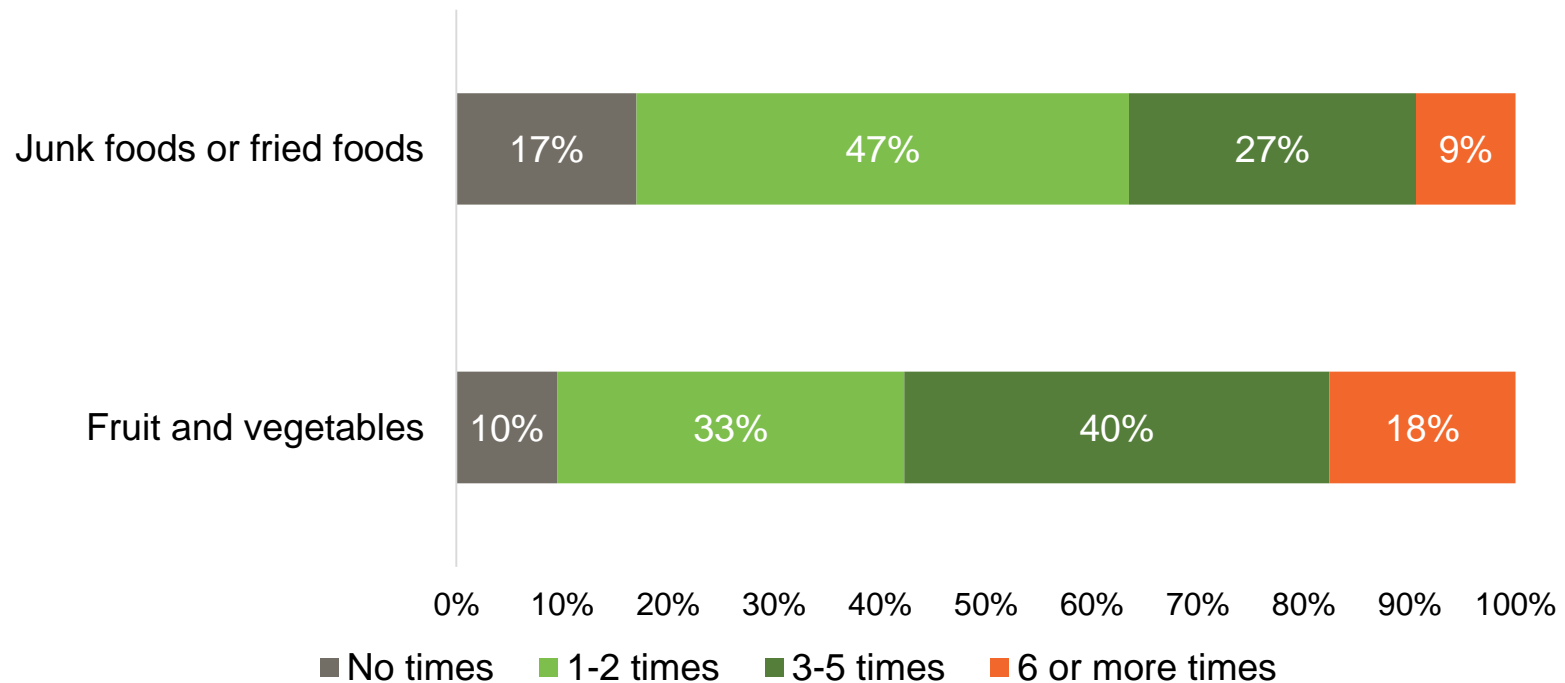|			
19%	18%	38%	25%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

■ Poor-Fair   ■ Good   ■ Very good   ■ Excellent

Vast majority (>80%) consider themselves in good to excellent health

n = 1 000

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Overall health – food consumption

Junk foods or fried foods
- No times: 17%
- 1-2 times: 47%
- 3-5 times: 27%
- 6 or more times: 9%

Fruit and vegetables
- No times: 10%
- 1-2 times: 33%
- 3-5 times: 40%
- 6 or more times: 18%
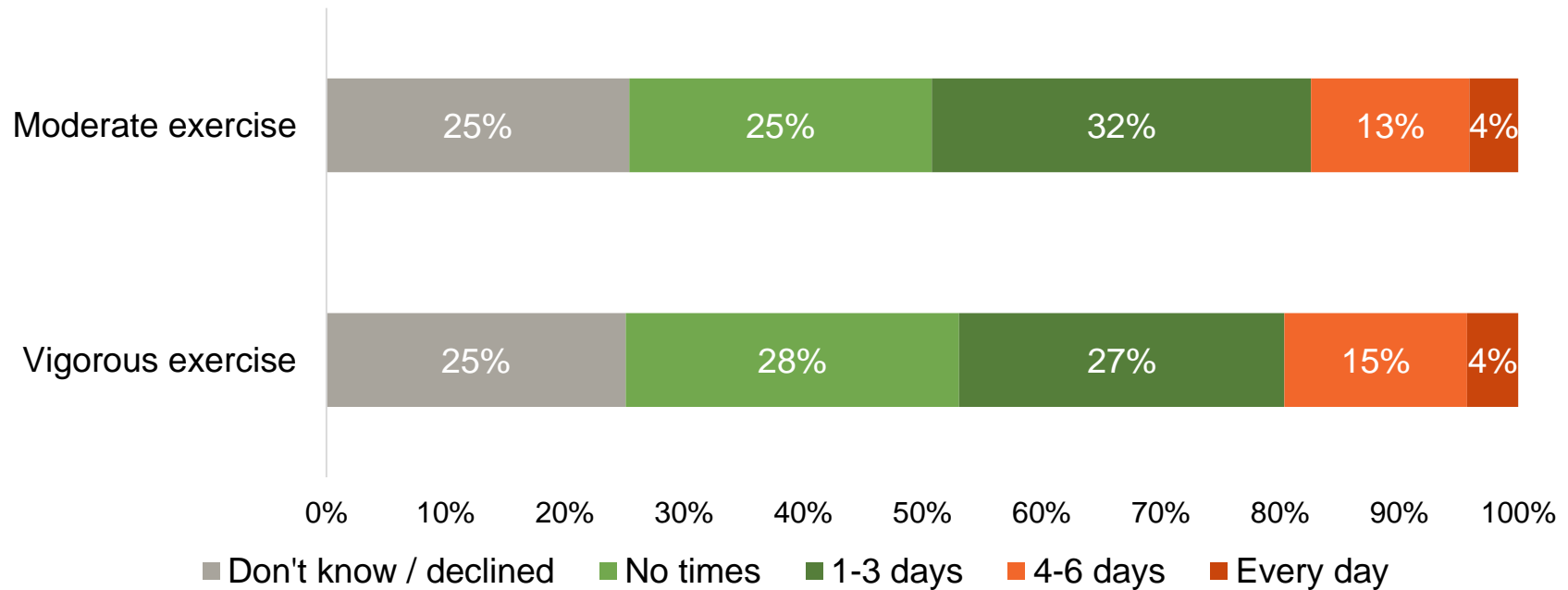
Legend: ■ No times ■ 1-2 times ■ 3-5 times ■ 6 or more times

83% ate junk/fried food, in the previous 7 days

18% ate fruit or vegetables on an almost daily basis, in the previous 7 days

n = 1 000

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Overall health – physical activity

In the last 7 days, how many times did you do…

WHO recommendations:
30 mins moderate-intensity OR
15 mins vigorous-intensity;
5 times per week

	Don't know / declined	No times	1-3 days	4-6 days	Every day
Moderate exercise	25%	25%	32%	13%	4%
Vigorous exercise	25%	28%	27%	15%	4%

Less than 20% exercised at WHO recommended frequency

Overall health – tobacco use

Do you currently use tobacco in any form?

Response	Percentage
No, not at all	63%
Yes, less than daily	9%
Yes, daily	28%
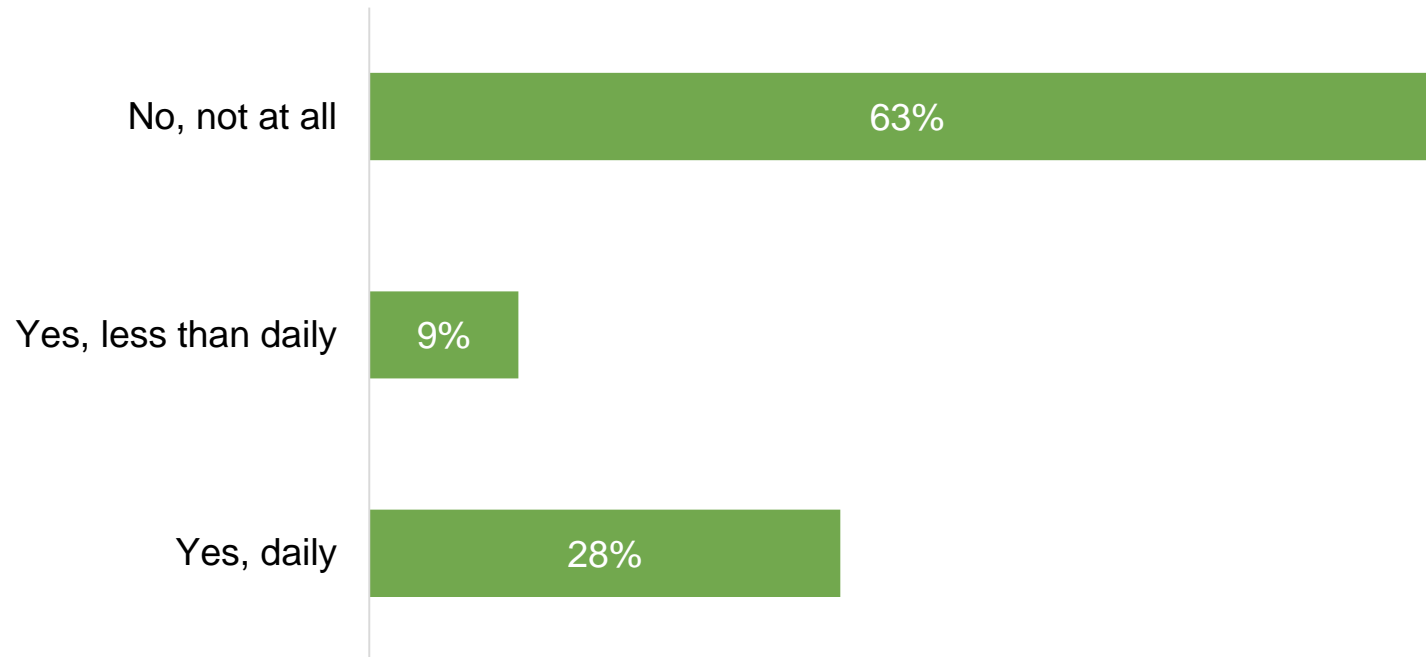
Majority do not use tobacco, while 28% use tobacco daily

n = 1 000

Overall health – body mass index

What is your weight and height? [BMI calculated based on self-reported data]

Obese (≥30 kg/m^2) — 48%

Overweight (25-29.99 km/m2) — 23%

Normal weight (18.5 - 24.99 kg/m^2) — 27%

Underweight (<18.5 kg/m^2) — 1%
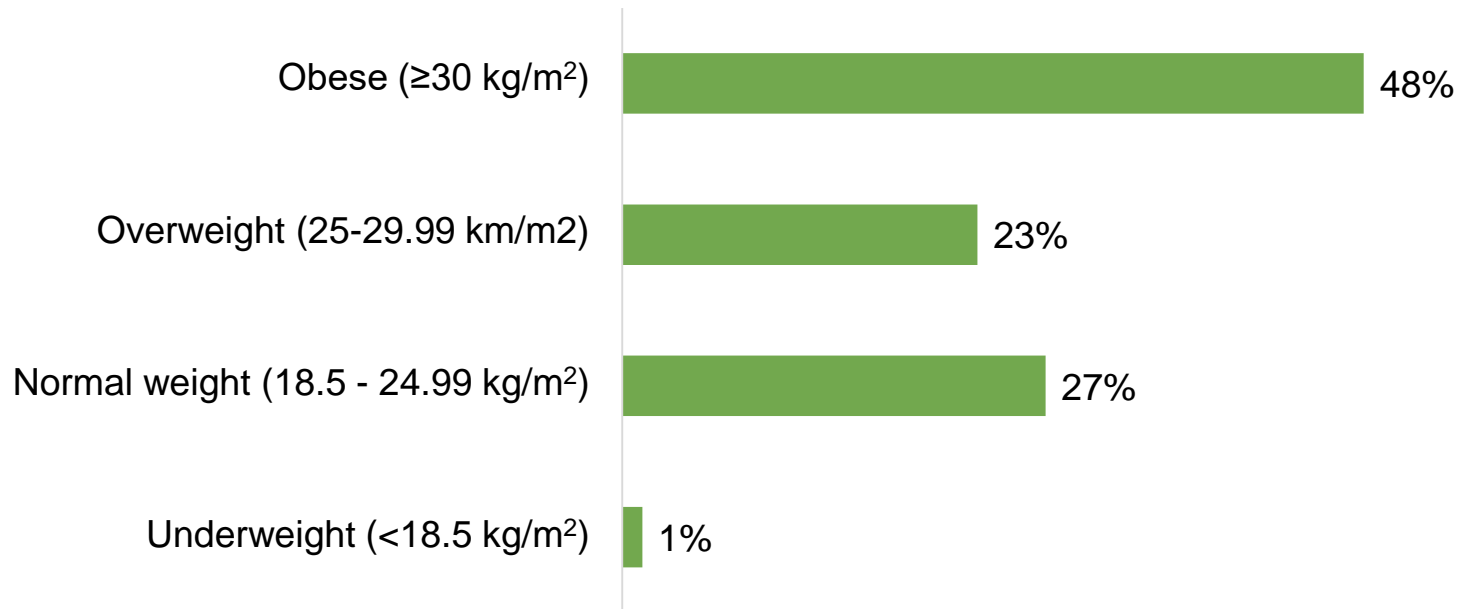
Majority (>70%) were either overweight or obese

n = 1 000; Body Mass Index (BMI) values using WHO guidelines (2016)

Overview of findings

High knowledge on the burden and risk factors for NCDs

- Most knew that overweight / obesity greatly increases risk of NCDs
- Large proportion considered NCDs a problem in SA
- Largest contributors to obesity identified as: junk food, genetic disposition, SSBs

Poor behaviour, despite most (81%) describing their health as good

- Most had eaten junk/fried food in the past week
- Low levels of exercise
- About a third used tobacco daily
- High levels (>70%) of overweight and obesity

Conclusions

Participant **behaviour poorly reflected their knowledge** on the burden and risk factors for NCDs

Need for health communication that moves beyond basic knowledge provision and promotes **practical, context-appropriate approaches for achieving a healthy lifestyle.**

Acknowledgements