

Collecting social data: adapting to the
COVID-19 pandemic

Truth be in the field: Resuming South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) field activities

South African Social Attitudes



- HSRC SASAS series conducted **annually since 2003**
- Round 17 was in the field (began late Feb) but interrupted by COVID-19
- **5 March**: first Covid-19 case; New safety protocols had to be developed
- **About 40% through round** when fieldwork suspended 24 March
- **Police and ward councilor resistance** to survey team presence



Moving Beyond The Great Disruption

HSRC REC: Advisory on fieldwork activities

- Resumption of previously approved clinical trials
- Other studies involving human contact must be determined on case-by-case basis
- **Sept:** HSRC SASAS submitted REC application for return to fieldwork
- **Early Oct:** Approval granted, subject to strict safety protocols
- **Planned start date: 2 Nov**, currently engaged in operational logistics, retraining, safety protocols



Challenges

PPE protocols

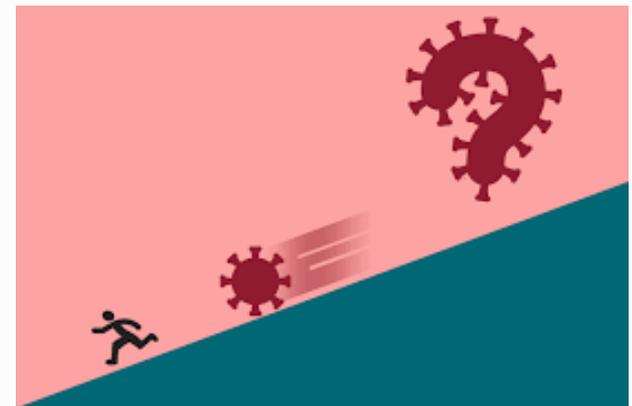
- Interviewer dropouts
- Risk to interviewers and participants
- Interviewer concerns over risk of infection from respondent households

Retraining

- Seven month break in field activities
- Retraining survey content and protocols
- PPE protocols

Uncertainty

- Second wave of pandemic
- Possibility of round being disrupted again
- Future rounds of surveying in 2021 and beyond?



Challenges



Budgetary contingencies

- Parking fees for CAPI service provider
- Retraining
- PPE procurement

External funders

- Reputational risk to funders and HSRC
- Renegotiated contract periods with.
- Some asked for presentation of interim (unweighted) results to give an indication of tendency

SASAS, COVID-19 and health promotion

COVID-19 and pandemic fatigue

- Increasing signs of **change in risk perceptions** among SA public
- Possible reason for **pandemic fatigue**: 'demotivation to follow recommended protective behaviours, emerging gradually over time and affected by a number of emotions, experiences and perceptions.' (WHO, 2020)
- Prof. Abdool Karim: **second wave now almost inevitable** – key factors = complacency, mass gatherings and eased travel restrictions
- Need for **continuous health promotion messaging**

Figure 1 - Future outlook on the pandemic

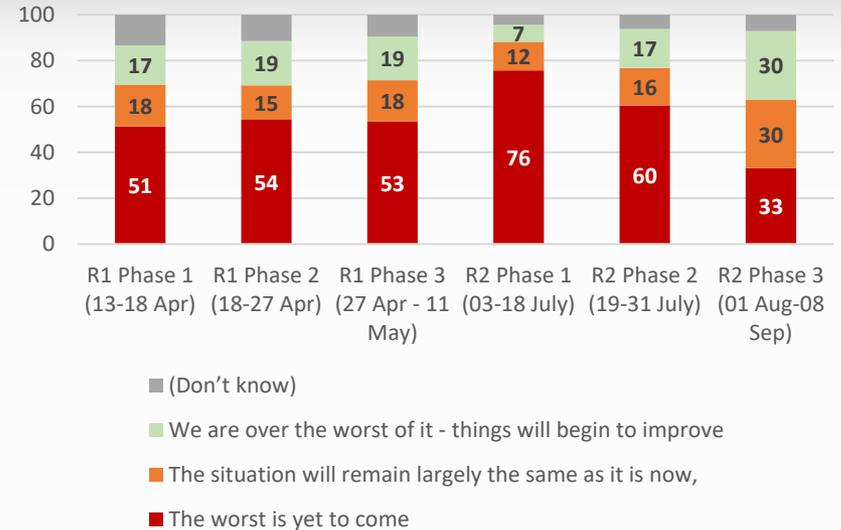
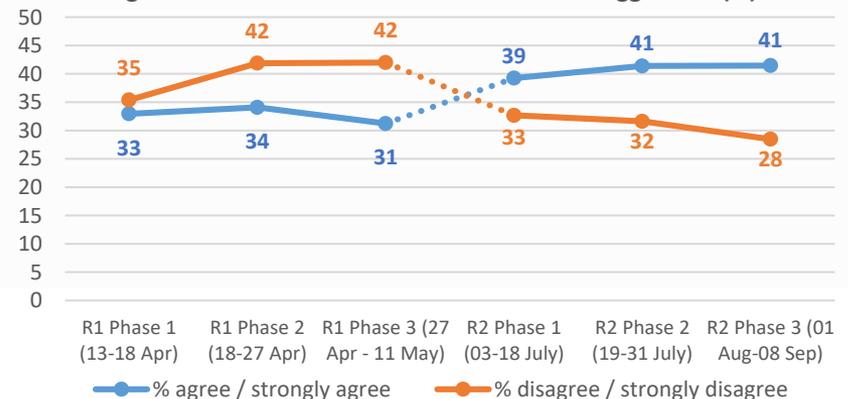


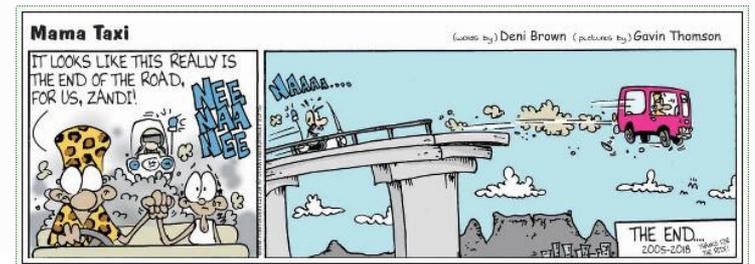
Figure 3 - Belief that Coronavirus threat is exaggerated (%)



SASAS, COVID-19 and health promotion

COVID-19 and pandemic fatigue

- HSRC worked with cartoonist Gavin Thomson, well known for the Mama Taxi series (2005-2018)
- Designed a simple COVID-19 cartoon focusing on adherence to basic health preventative behaviours (mask-wearing in public, social distancing and sanitising)





thank you

English	Thank you
Afrikaans	Dankie
Ndebele	Ngiyathokoza
Xhosa	Enkosi
Zulu	Ngiyabonga
Sepedi	Ke a leboga
Sesotho	Ke a leboha
Setswana	Ke a leboga
Xitsonga	Ndzi khense ngopfu
SiSwati	Ngiyabonga
Tshivenda	Ndi a livhuwa
Nama	Gangans

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