

Statistics show vaccine benefit

Evidence from Momentum Life Insurance's claims experience shows that a vaccination is the best solution to the Covid-19 problem. These statistics provide a view of the impact this virus has had on the South African insured population as well as the positive effect of the vaccination rollout.



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The insurer provided a window into the impact Covid-19 has had and will have on life insurance claims based on insights from a significant life insurance market share.

For 2021, until the end of July, Momentum has paid close to R1.4bn for another 842 Covid-19 related death claims, which shows the devastation inflicted by the second and third waves – and without a clear end in sight for the third wave. Of the R5.5bn in claims paid in 2020, over R370m was for 217 Covid-19 related death claims.

“Getting vaccinated is the best thing any South African can do to protect their families, themselves, and our nation’s economy. Our claims experience proves first-hand that the vaccines work,” says Jenny Ingram, head of product development at Momentum Life Insurance.

To provide perspective, Ingram says respiratory death claims (in which Covid-19 is categorised) formed the third highest number of claims in 2020, representing 19% of their 2020 death claims. However, respiratory complications had seen a dramatic increase of 145% from the previous year.

“This increase is directly linked to Covid-19,” says Ingram. “Another interesting trend that was observed during 2020, was the fact that high value death claims of R10m or more, almost doubled from the year before.”

Effect on critical illnesses

“As we battle the impact of the third wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, statistics clearly indicate that the fear of contracting the virus prevents many people from consulting with their doctors or specialists regarding treatment for the most prevalent chronic diseases in the country, which our statistics reveal as cardiovascular disease, cancers, diabetes and chronic respiratory diseases,” she says.

This trend is also highlighted by The Hospital Association of South Africa, which mostly represents private hospitals, which shows that, on a global scale, the number of new oncology patient registrations has decreased by 50% year-on-year during periods of severe Covid-19 increases in countries with established oncology care programmes.

“In all likelihood, this will result in an unusual increase in the number of claims for critical illnesses going forward,” she says.

Income protection claims down

From an income protection point of view, from March 2020 until July 2021, Momentum Life Insurance has paid 902 Covid-19 related income protection claim payouts to a total value of more than R20m.

Although medical professionals made up the bulk of income protection claims in the first wave of the infections, this number showed a steady and remarkable decrease as the country moved through the second wave and into the third.

This number went from 60% in the first wave, to 48% in the second wave to 34% in the third wave (thus far).

“I am confident that this has predominantly been driven by the fact that our healthcare workers were receiving COVID-19 vaccinations as part of the Sisonke trial,” says Ingram.

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