

The background features abstract, overlapping green geometric shapes in various shades, creating a modern and dynamic look. The shapes are primarily triangles and polygons, some semi-transparent, layered on a white background.

Compliance to and Impact of the Presidential Directives towards Reduction of COVID-19 in Uganda

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Purpose:

To monitor alcohol control measures in COVID-19 period and the extent to which the presidential directives during the lock down reduced alcohol related harm

Scope

The study covered 70 leaders from 15 districts randomly selected from the four regions of Uganda.

Informants included members of parliament media personnel, religious leaders and District/Sub county leaders who are involved in enforcement of the directives.

It was qualitative using interview and observation methods in communities where UAPA members operate from.

Phased Approach to analysis

- For purposes of analysing the compliance of the presidential directives we shall break down the lockdown in three phases each with distinct features

However there was a common factor in all the three phases:

Adherence to health precautions, closure of bars and night clubs, the ban on gatherings and night curfews

Phases 1

Characteristics:

- total lockdown
- A ban on Public and private transport
- Closure of all activities except essential services

Phases 2

Characteristics:

- Gradual opening of private transport and selected services
- A ban on Public and private transport
- Closure of all activities except essential services

.

Phases 3

Characteristics:

- Gradual opening of private transport and public transport
- a variety of business enterprises were opened
- Many non-essential sectors and those capable of bringing together large gatherings remained closed

Did lockdown measures reduce alcohol related harm?

- Respondents were aware of all the directives and observed that the measures would have been sufficient to prevent alcohol abuse but were most effective in the first phase

Did lockdown measures reduce alcohol related harm?

- Alcohol use during the first phase of the lockdown seems to have reduced especially in urban areas
- Decline in alcohol abuse in the initial period of the lockdown was essentially attributed to strict surveillance-offenders were prosecuted

Did lockdown measures reduce alcohol related harm?

- ***Lapse in Implementation: Escalation of Alcohol Harm during the Lockdown***
- **We observed extreme laxity in surveillance and enforcement especially in phase two and three of the lockdown**
- **Hence the lockdown failed to curb alcohol misuse**

Critical gap

- Presidential directives did not provide strict measures when compared to our counterparts in Kenya and other places like India and South Africa

Important observations

- Continued production, promotion, transportation and open selling of alcohol
- Bars were still operating
- New drinking spaces: retail promoted stockpiling
- Homemade alcohol not touched

Impact of Alcohol Use During Lockdown

More people reported negative consequences of alcohol

- increased Gender Based Violence/Teenage pregnancies resulting into family unrest,
- injuries and deaths
- fatalities resulting from acute alcohol poisoning were reported as people with Alcohol Use Disorder (AUDs) suffering withdrawals did not have guidance on where to seek assistance.

Contribution of Civil society in controlling alcohol harm during COVID-19

- Production of educative materials like *Tumuzizike ekuuli production*
- Sensitizations on radios and TV station
- provide relief services to vulnerable populations
- and offer treatment services to those affected by alcohol Use Disorder (AUD)

Recommendations

- enact the National Alcohol policy and present the Alcohol Control Bill
- engage more restrictive measures such as temporal total bans on its production, trade and consumption during health emergencies

Recommendations continued

- government to step up the surveillance and implementation of the presidential directives
- to expand current initiatives for treatment of Alcohol Use Disorders
- Support livelihood diversification for alcohol dealers especially in the informal sector.

Recommendations continued

- all leaders and politicians not to use alcohol as a campaign tool
- Parents should lead extemporary lives and not use alcohol before their children
- media fraternity to be responsible while marketing alcoholic products.



➤ **For a nation free from Alcohol related harm**