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## No link between gender, BMI and Covid deaths, study reveals

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NEITHER being male, nor increased body mass index (BMI) are associated with increased mortality in Covid-19 inpatients admitted into intensive care units (ICU).

These are the findings of a new study that is in contrast to some previous research, led by Professor Bruce M Biccard, professor and second chair in the Department of Anaesthesia and Perioperative Medicine at UCT.

Published in the journal *Anaesthesia*, the study provided an analysis of 58 studies involving 44305 patients.

UCT said patients with Covid-19 in ICU were 40% more likely to die with a history of smoking, 54% more likely with high blood pressure, 41% more likely with diabetes, 75% more likely with respiratory disease, around twice as likely with cardiovascular disease or cancer and 2.4 times more likely to die with kidney disease.

“The findings confirm the association between diabetes, cardiovascular and respiratory comorbidities with mortality in Covid-19 patients,” Biccard said.

“However, the reported associations between male sex and increasing BMI worsening outcomes are not supported by this meta-analysis of patients admitted to ICU. This meta-analysis provides a large sample size with respect to these risk factors and is a robust estimate of risk associated with male sex and BMI in critically ill Covid-19 patients.”

Other factors associated with an increased risk of death were the severity of organ failure, needing mechanical ventilation and elevated white blood cell counts and other markers of inflammation.

The risk factors of hypertension, smoking and respiratory disease may be linked by their association with angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) receptors in the body, as seen by the increased expression of ACE-2 receptors among smokers and patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

“The association between hypertension and cardiovascular disease and increased mortality may be linked to the risk of cardiac injury associated with the systemic inflammatory response to Covid-19 infection,” added Biccard.

As of yesterday, the Western Cape had 18 518 active Covid-19 infections, with a total number of 323 711 Covid19 cases to date and 292841 recoveries.

As announced by Acting National Minister of Health Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane, registration for people aged 50 to 59 will open tomorrow, and vaccinations start on July 15.

This is in addition to those residents who are 60 years and older, who continue to be able to register for their vaccine if they decide to. To register, visit <https://vaccine.enroll.health.gov.za/#/> (the link can also be found on [www.westerncape.gov.za](http://www.westerncape.gov.za)). You can also dial \*134\*832# and follow the prompts (free on all SA networks) or WhatsApp “REGISTER” to 0600123456.