

# OSHMed Magazine

Occupational Safety & Health and Medical

by



**THE 7 MILLION LIFELINE  
40% OF CANCERS ARE  
PREVENTABLE**

THE HEAVY TOLL OF IMMUNITY • HEALTH & SAFETY: A SAFETY BEYOND THE SITE • FUN TIME - JOKE OF THE WEEK • E.M.A. WEEKLY EMERGENCY STATISTICS

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# The 7 Million Lifeline: 40% of Cancers are Preventable

**GENEVA** – In a landmark report released today that has sent shockwaves through the global medical community, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) have delivered a sobering yet hopeful ultimatum: **nearly half of all cancer cases worldwide are entirely within our power to stop.**



The comprehensive 2026 study reveals that roughly **7.1 million annual cancer diagnoses**—approximately 40% of the global total— are linked to modifiable risk factors. The findings suggest that with aggressive policy shifts and lifestyle changes, millions of families could be spared the trauma of a cancer diagnosis each year.

## The "Big Five" Killers

The report identifies a cluster of primary drivers behind the escalating

global cancer burden. While genetics and aging play unavoidable roles, the vast majority of the "preventable 40%" are tied to five specific areas:

- **Tobacco Use:** Remains the leading cause of preventable malignancy, despite decades of public health campaigns.
- **Alcohol Consumption:** The IARC reiterated that there is no "safe" level of consumption regarding cancer risk, particularly for breast and colorectal cancers.
- **High Body Mass Index (BMI):** Obesity is now rivalling smoking as a top driver of metabolic-related cancers.
- **Physical Inactivity:** Sedentary lifestyles in an increasingly digital world are contributing to rising rates of internal inflammation and disease.
- **Environmental Factors:** For the first time, the report placed heavy emphasis on **air pollution** and occupational hazards as systemic risks that individuals cannot always control on their own.

## A Call for "Systemic Prevention"

"We have long viewed cancer as a stroke of biological bad luck," said Dr. Elena Vance, a lead researcher associated with the IARC. "While luck is a factor, this data proves that 7.1 million times a year, the 'luck' was actually a failure of policy,



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environment, or habit."

The WHO is calling on world leaders to move beyond simple "awareness" and toward **legislative action**. Recommendations include higher taxes on ultra-processed foods, stricter urban air quality mandates, and more robust workplace protections against carcinogens.

## The Economic Ripple Effect

Beyond the human toll, the report highlights the staggering economic cost of "preventable" illness. The global economy loses trillions of dollars annually in healthcare expenditures and lost productivity—costs that could be drastically reduced by investing in preventative care rather than late-stage treatment.

"The science is settled," the report concludes. "The question is no longer *how* to save these seven million lives, but whether we have the collective will to change the environments that endanger them."

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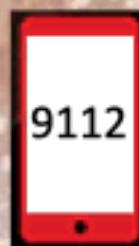
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# The Heavy Toll of Immunity: Namibia's Rising Obesity Crisis Linked to Severe Infection Risk

**WINDHOEK** – As Namibia grapples with a shifting health landscape, a new warning from medical experts suggests that the country's rising waistlines are doing more than just increasing the risk of diabetes and heart disease – they are fundamentally weakening the nation's ability to fight off infections.



A recent report, echoing findings from the international medical community, highlights a direct link between obesity and the severity of infectious diseases. In Namibia, where urban centers like Windhoek and Ojomuise are seeing obesity rates soar to over 30% among adults, this "silent pandemic" is becoming a critical factor in how the population survives seasonal flu, respiratory

viruses, and even post-surgical recovery.

## A Weakened Shield

Medical data indicates that excess body fat is not just stored energy; it is biologically active tissue that can trigger chronic, low-grade inflammation. This persistent state of "biological stress" effectively distracts the immune system. When a new pathogen—like a severe influenza strain or a bacterial infection—attacks, the body's defense mechanisms are slower to respond and less effective at clearing the threat.

For Namibians living in densely populated urban areas, this means that what might be a mild illness for a healthy-weight individual can quickly escalate into a life-threatening condition for someone with a high Body Mass Index (BMI).

## The Urban-Rural Divide

Recent studies conducted in the Khomas region underscore a stark disparity. While rural communities continue to face challenges related to undernutrition, urban populations are caught in a "double burden." The shift toward sedentary lifestyles and the high availability of calorie-dense, nutrient-poor "Western-style" processed foods has led to a spike in overweight and obesity, particularly among women.

In Windhoek, research suggests that as many as **40% of urban women** are classified as overweight or obese.



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This demographic is now finding itself at the highest risk for "complicated" infections, requiring longer hospital stays and more intensive medical intervention.

### **The "Double Pandemic"**

The Ministry of Health and Social Services (MoHSS) has long focused on the battle against HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis. However, officials are now warning that the obesity crisis is complicating these existing efforts. Obesity can impair the body's response to vaccines and has been shown to worsen the prognosis for patients with chronic viral infections.

"We can no longer treat obesity as a separate, cosmetic issue," says one local health advocate. "It is an

underlying condition that makes every other disease—from the common cold to serious surgical wounds—harder to treat. It's a weight that our healthcare system can increasingly ill afford to carry."

### **A Call for Change**

With the WHO predicting that Namibia may miss its 2025 global targets for curbing obesity, the focus is shifting toward "Systemic Prevention." This includes:

- **Taxation and Regulation:** Potential levies on sugary drinks and ultra-processed foods.
- **Urban Infrastructure:** Creating safer spaces for physical activity in townships.



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- **Workplace Wellness:** Encouraging Namibian employers to incorporate movement and health screenings into the workday.

As the country looks toward its 2030 health goals, the message is clear: losing weight isn't just about the mirror—it's about ensuring that when the next virus strikes, Namibia's citizens are strong enough to fight back.

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The advertisement features a background image of a construction site with cranes and industrial structures. Overlaid on this are the company's logo, a red stylized 'A' and 'J' forming a cross-like shape, and the text 'ATA OSH-Med International' in a blue and red box. Below this, the tagline 'Your Future in Healthcare.' is written in a smaller font. The main headline 'MEDICAL CARE FOR YOU' is displayed in large, bold, white letters. A horizontal line separates this from the sub-headline 'here & everywhere' in a slightly smaller bold white font. At the bottom, the website 'www.osh-med.pro/medical-services', the phone number '+264 61 302 931', and the email 'ata@osh-med.pro' are listed.

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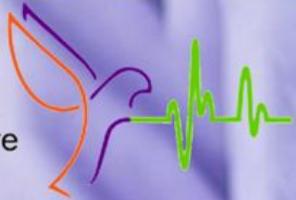
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# Health & Safety - Safety Beyond the Site

**WINDHOEK** – For decades, occupational health and safety (OSH) in Namibia was often viewed as a "checklist" exercise—a set of rules tucked away in the Labour Act of 2007. However, as we move through 2025, the narrative is shifting. From the bustling construction sites in Windhoek to the offshore rigs in the Oranjemund basin and the deep shafts of our mines, the focus has moved beyond mere physical protection to a holistic "Total Worker Health" approach.

## The Legislative Turning Point

The biggest driver of change this year might be the implementation of the new Occupational Safety and Health Bill. This landmark legislation overhauls the outdated framework, introducing stricter penalties (fines up to N\$200,000) and expanding the definition of "worker" to include the informal sector and volunteers.

Employers are no longer just responsible for providing hard hats; they are now legally mandated to conduct rigorous risk assessments, appoint dedicated Safety and Health Officers, and establish formal OSH committees for any workplace with more than 20 employees.

### 5 EVERYDAY SAFETY HABITS THAT SAVE LIVES AT WORK



Always inspect your PPE before use



Report unsafe conditions immediately



Maintain a clutter-free workspace



Use correct lifting techniques



Take regular breaks to stay alert

## 2026 Trend: The Rise of Mental Wellness and Technology

Aligning with global trends seen in the Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) community, Namibia is beginning to address "the silent hazards."

- 1. Mental Health as a Safety Priority:** In industries like mining and offshore oil, where workers face long shifts and isolation, mental health is now recognised as a critical safety factor. Stress and fatigue are leading causes of workplace accidents. In 2026, a safe workplace is one that offers psychological support as readily as it offers first aid.



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**2. Digital Safety Integration:** We are seeing a surge in the use of real-time monitoring. Whether it's heat stress sensors for workers in the Namib Desert or AI-driven hazard detection in manufacturing plants, technology is helping Namibian firms move from *reacting* to accidents to *predicting* them.

**3. The Heat Challenge:** As global temperatures rise, "Thermal Stress" has become a top-tier hazard for Namibia's outdoor workforce. New standards for

hydration breaks and shade requirements are no longer suggestions—they are becoming essential components of a compliant safety plan.

## Bridging the Gap: Why Professional Expertise Matters

Despite the progress, many Namibian businesses—particularly Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs)—struggle to keep up with these evolving legal and technological

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demands. A recent study in Windhoek revealed that many construction sites still lack formal OSH policies, leaving both workers and directors at high risk.

This is where local expertise becomes invaluable. Navigating the complexities of the new OSH Bill, Social Security compliance, and international ISO standards requires a partner who understands both the Namibian legal landscape and global best practices.

## Your Partner in Safety: OSH-Med International

For Namibian companies looking to transition into this new era of safety, **OSH-Med International** stands as the country's leading service and training provider.

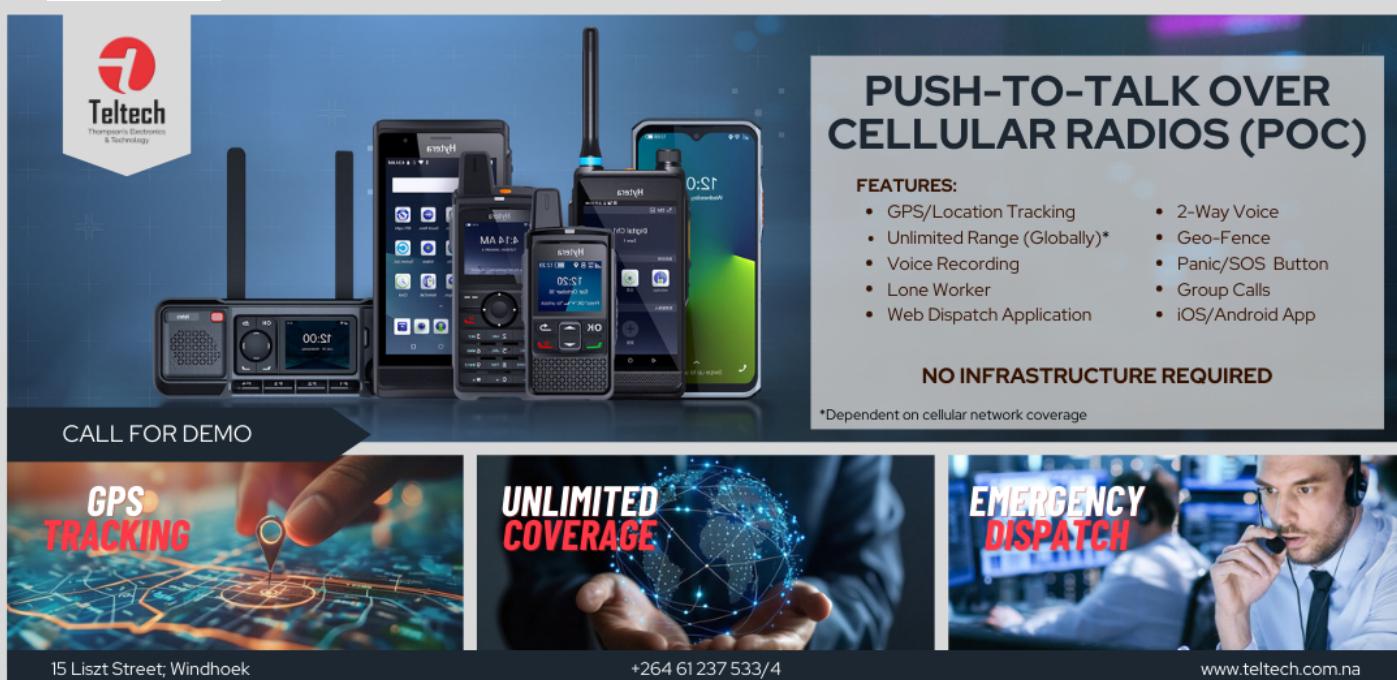
Whether you need to train **OSH Representatives**, conduct a **HIRA**

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**For professional help and to ensure your workplace meets the standards of 2026, visit [www.osh-med.pro](http://www.osh-med.pro) or contact their Windhoek office to secure your 2026 course calendar.**

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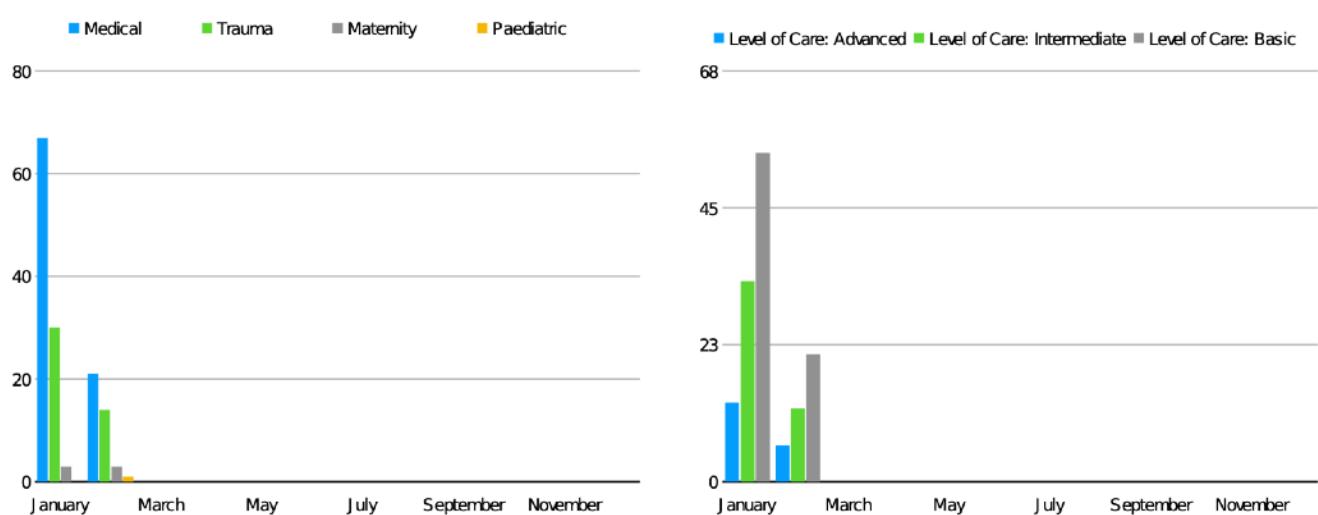
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## updated 11.2.2026

In 2026  
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up till now

	<b>Medical</b>	<b>Trauma</b>	<b>Maternity</b>	<b>Paediatric</b>	<b>Level of Care: Advanced</b>	<b>Level of Care: Intermediate</b>	<b>Level of Care: Basic</b>
<b>January</b>	67	30	3	0	13	33	54
<b>February</b>	21	14	3	1	6	12	21
<b>March</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>April</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>May</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>June</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>July</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>August</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>September</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>October</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>November</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>December</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total per annum</b>	88	44	6	1	19	45	75
<b>Total</b>	139				139		



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➤ <b>What</b>	happened?
➤ <b>What</b>	kind of injuries?
➤ <b>How many</b>	injured person
➤ <b>Waiting</b>	for further question

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**9112**

**Fire Brigade:**

Windhoek

061-21 1111

**Police:**

NamPol

10 111

City Police (Whk)

061-302 302

MVA Fund

9682

(all numbers are from GRN or non-profit organisations)



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