

High Risk of Coronavirus in Taxis

Social distancing is one of the important COVID-19 regulations. Ever since the beginning of the lockdown, people have been advised to practice social distancing. At first not a lot of people were moving around since everyone was forced to stay home during lockdown Level 4 and 5. People were only allowed to buy essentials and taxis were not fully loaded.

But things began to change during lockdown Level 3 when people returned to work. Even people began selling in the streets. Taxi operators also started taking full loads. Some taxi owners claimed that their taxis were in a process of being repossessed by the banks. The government offered the taxi industry 1 billion relief fund but it was taxi associations rejected it. Taxis then went ahead taking full loads while there was still coronavirus risks.

Sitting in taxis is not safe for taxi users and drivers. With no physical distancing they are more exposed to COVID-19. But passengers have no choice. They have to get to work and there is little alternatives. Mulalo Tharaga, a 28-year-old woman who works in Randburg, North of Johannesburg takes taxis on a daily basis to work, said she is scared of catching the virus.

“I do not have a choice because I have to go to work. I am a single parent and I have to work for my kids. I do fear that one day I may carry the virus back to my children” Tharaga said. This is one of the challenges people from the working class and poor communities are faced with because they do not have their own transport.

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