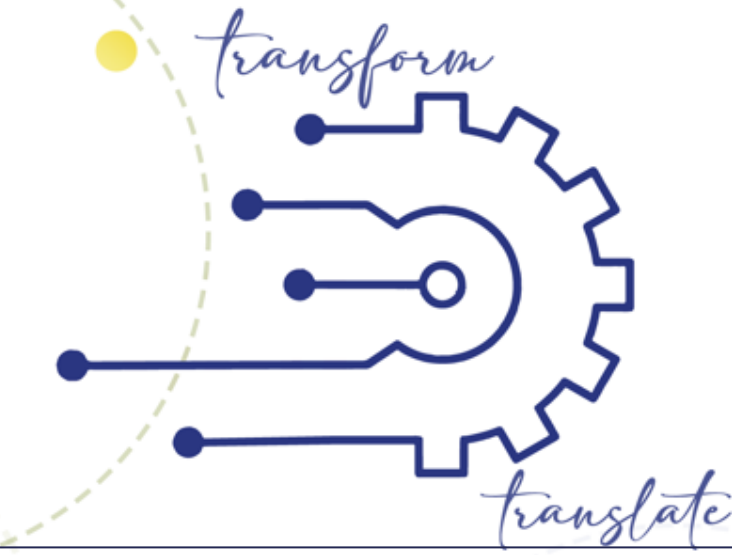


ROLES PLAYED BY MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH GRADUATES FROM SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES DURING COVID-19

Gumbeze N, Zweigenthal V, Shung-King M, White J, Gwini G, Dlungwane T, Matlala SF, Tshitangano TG, Christofides N, Mokgatle M, Nxumalo N, Opare A, Patrick S, Rispel L, Schaay N

University of the Witwatersrand, University of Cape Town, University of KwaZulu Natal, University of Limpopo, University of Pretoria, University of Venda, University of the Western Cape, Sefako Mokgatho Health Sciences University.

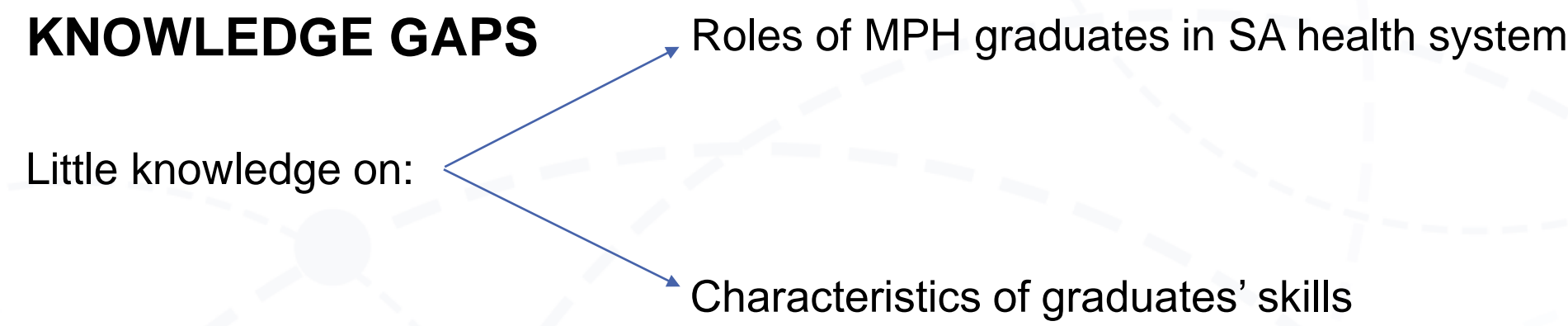
PHASA 2023
TRANSFORMING RESEARCH
TRANSLATION-
REIMAGINING
PUBLIC HEALTH EVIDENCE,
POLICIES, AND PRACTICE



BACKGROUND

- The South African (SA) Human Resources for Health Strategy identified a need to develop a competencies-based Master of Public Health (MPH) degree.
- Competencies are utilised by graduates when they perform their roles at work and in society.
- COVID-19 made people aware of the need of well-trained public health professionals.
- SA recorded the highest number of coronavirus cases in Africa.
- Pandemic experience can be used to learn and improve health workforce preparedness for future public health threats.

KNOWLEDGE GAPS



OBJECTIVES

This study aimed to describe MPH graduates from SA universities' perspectives on :

- roles they performed before the COVID-19 pandemic.
- any changes in the roles they performed during COVID-19.
- roles that are relevant and required for MPH graduates during pandemics like COVID-19.

METHODOLOGY

- Secondary analysis of qualitative in-depth interviews, from a primary study on competencies and utilities of MPH learning from SA universities.
- Five MPH graduates from each university who completed their degree before 2012 or after 2016 participated.
- The eight institutions included were:



- Thematic analysis used to analyse the data.

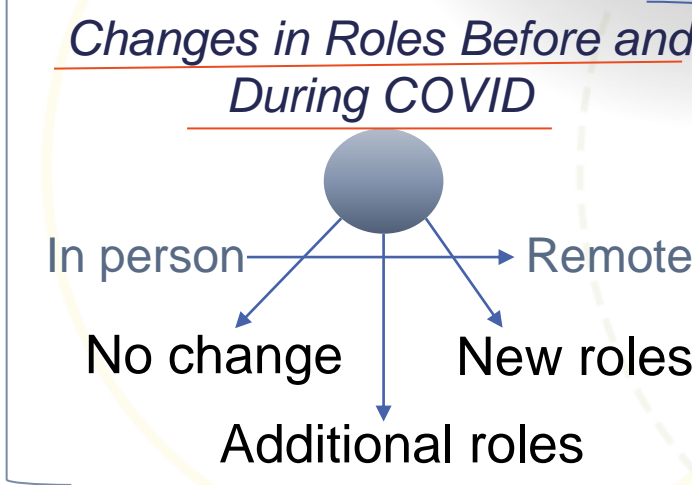
RESULTS

ROLES PERFORMED BY MPH GRADUATES

Graduates played many different roles. Examples of roles are listed* below from most mentioned to least.

ROLES BEFORE COVID	ROLES DURING COVID	RELEVANT ROLES FUTURE PANDEMICS
Managerial	Research/Data management	Leadership
Coordinator	Health Promotion	Health Promotion
Leadership	Managerial	Epidemiology Related
M&E	Advisor	Communication
Research/Data management	Training	Research/Data management
Advisor	Leadership	Policy Development
Training	Created tool	Advisor
Clinician	Volunteering	Managerial

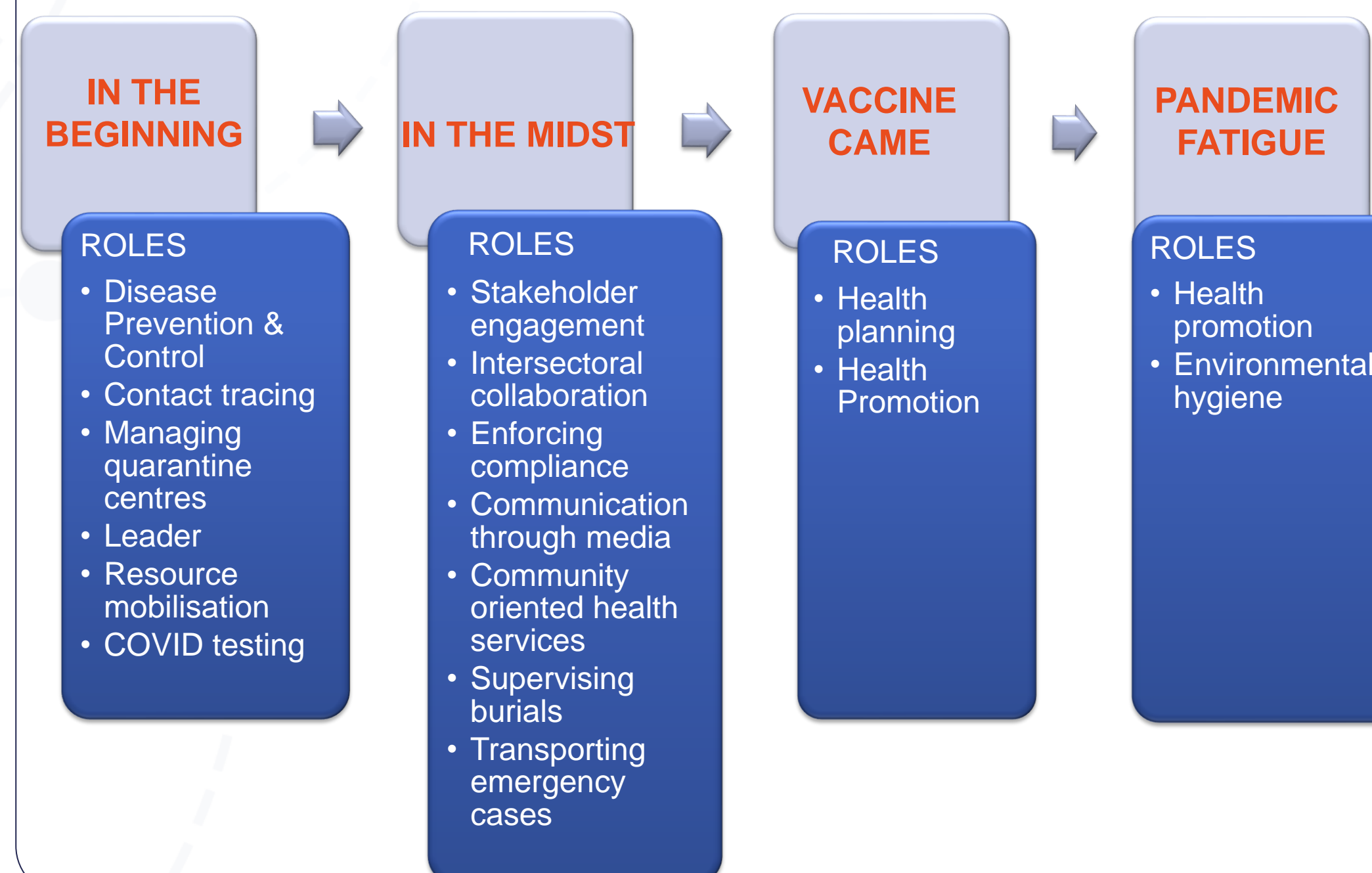
*lists are not exhaustive



CHANGES IN ROLES AS THE PANDEMIC UNFOLDED

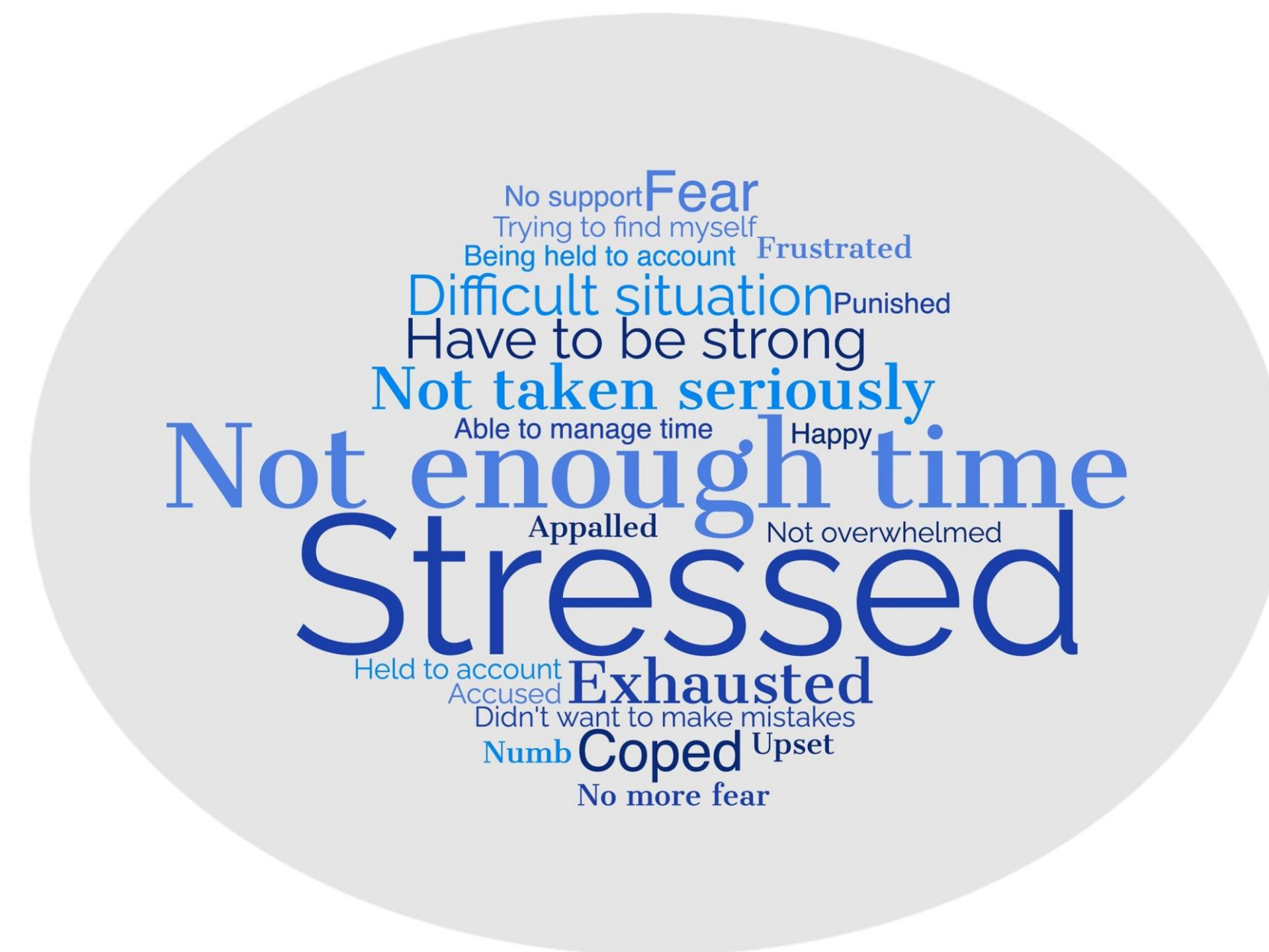
Example: Participant 38 University 8 Country 2

TIMEFRAME



RESULTS (CONT.)

EMOTIONS DURING EXECUTION OF ROLES



CONCLUSIONS

- MPH graduates performed a diverse range of roles.
- Their value-add was driven by existing skills and positions within the health system.
- Roles played demonstrated competencies in all 7 areas that guide MPH training in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).
- In future pandemics human resource management systems in LMICs should ensure that MPH graduates with the appropriate skills are brought to the forefront.
- Difficulty coping with roles and psychological stress experienced was related to an increased workload and lack of various forms of support.

ADVOCACY MESSAGE

Assessing PH graduates' roles can be used to improve post-graduate training programmes. This combined with effective human resource management systems can help towards ensuring that the PH workforce is better prepared for future PH threats.

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