# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**FOR WRITTENREPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 1564**

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**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 26)**

**Ms N N Chirwa (EFF) to ask the Minister of Health:**

What research has his department conducted in the efforts to study and observe immunity in the South African context as research conducted in Spain on immunity has shown that recovering from Covid-19 does not necessarily result in immunity against the virus?

###### NW1940E

**REPLY:**

The concept of herd immunity is the indirect protection from a contagious infectious disease such as SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19) and related corona viruses and the threshold is crossed when enough people are immune and the number of new cases is are declining. The effectiveness of herd immunity is dependent on several epidemiological principles which include the following:

* The disease must carry a substantial health risk.
* The risk of contracting the disease must be high.
* The vaccine must be effective.
* The vaccine must be safe.

The COVID-19 virus fits all the above principles, but there is currently no clinically proven vaccine against the virus. The immune response to Covid-19 is currently not yet fully understood and definitive data on post-infection immunity is also lacking.

South Africa has not published results of any immunological studies in response to the SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19) threat. Such a research is normally conducted by research institutes such as through the Department of Science and Innovation’s research institutions and Councils including entities such as the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC)and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).

There are several studies initiated by the National Department of Health (NDoH), the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD), the National Health Laboratory Service (NHLS), universities and institutes, including the South African National Blood Service (SANBS), that are currently under consideration to assist the country in understanding the immunological response to the COVID-19 disease and the level of antibody response at an individual level and on a population level. This work is ongoing, and results will be released as they become available.

END.