

REPORT ON WEEKLY DEATHS IN SOUTH AFRICA

1 JANUARY 2020–
5 JANUARY 2021
(WEEK 53)

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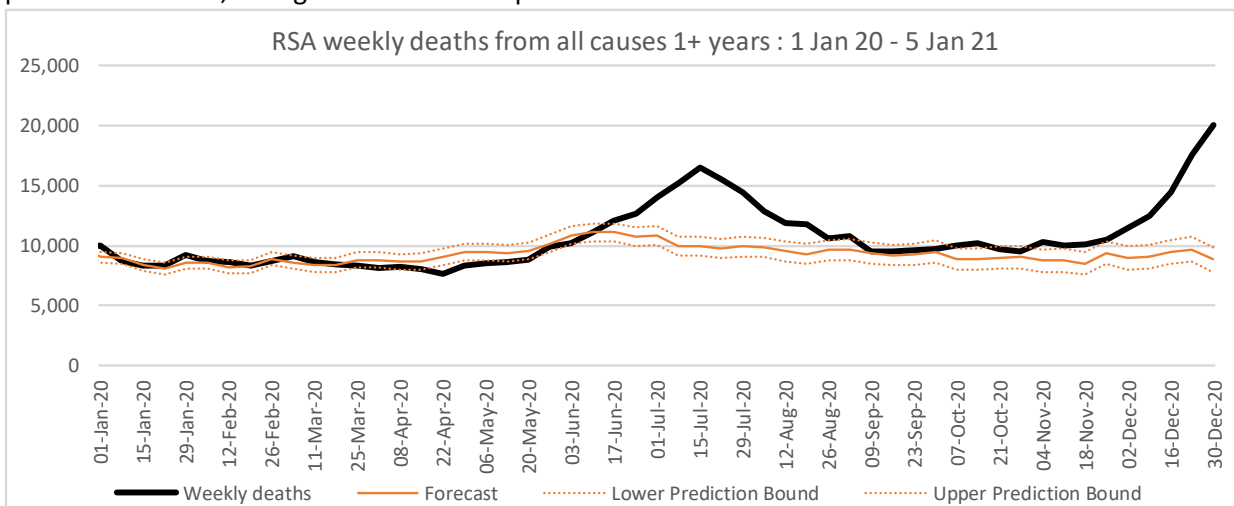
Burden of Disease Research Unit
South African Medical Research Council
11 January 2020



UCT Centre
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Trends

- The weekly number of deaths of persons 1+ years of age from all causes continued to increase in the week **30 Dec 2020 – 5 Jan 2021** with the country experiencing a record number of **20,063** deaths in a single week.
- During the week including New Year’s Day the number of natural deaths exceeded the predicted number by **131%**, resulting in an excess of **10,907** deaths from natural causes among persons 1+ years.
- During the period, **6 May – 5 January 2021**, there have been a total of **83,918** excess deaths from natural causes of persons 1+ years old, using the revised base accounting for lower mortality during lockdown. For people 1-59 years the excess is **30,000** and **55,108** for people 60+ years.
- Deaths from natural causes in the **Eastern Cape** have continued to increase slowly with **2,298** excess natural deaths experienced in the week **30 Dec 2020 – 5 Jan 2021** compared to **2,228** in the previous week and may be showing the early signs of turning. The numbers of deaths in the 2nd wave is considerably higher than the number of excess natural deaths that occurred in the peak of the 1st wave in the province (**1,597**). Natural deaths in **Nelson Mandela Bay** have continued to decrease and the 2nd wave in **Buffalo City** has turned.
- **KwaZulu Natal** has experienced a rapid increase in natural deaths. The number of excess natural deaths in the week of **30 Dec 2020 – 5 Jan 2021** reached a record high of **3,389**, more than double the peak of the 1st wave of **1,306** deaths. The number of deaths from natural causes in **eThekweni** has also increased rapidly reaching **875** excess natural deaths, considerably higher than the peak of the 1st wave when there were **363** excess deaths.
- Natural deaths in the **Western Cape** have continued to increase rapidly, with **1,432** excess natural deaths occurring during the week of New Year. There are indications of a slow-down in the increase, but the number of deaths has not yet turned and is more than double than the peak of the 1st wave (**601**). The number of natural deaths in the **City of Cape Town** has also increased rapidly with a record number of excess deaths. (**943**).
- Deaths from natural causes have increased rapidly in **Gauteng** in the past three weeks, with **1,725** excess deaths during the week of New Year. Similar upticks have been experienced in the **City of Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni** and the **City of Tshwane**, each with an excess of about **500** deaths.
- Increases natural deaths have been experienced across all of the remaining provinces.
- The weekly number of deaths from unnatural causes in the week **30 Dec 2020 – 5 Jan 2021** was below the predicted number, falling below the lower prediction bound.



Numbers have been scaled to the estimated actual number of death and for the last week has been adjusted for delayed registrations

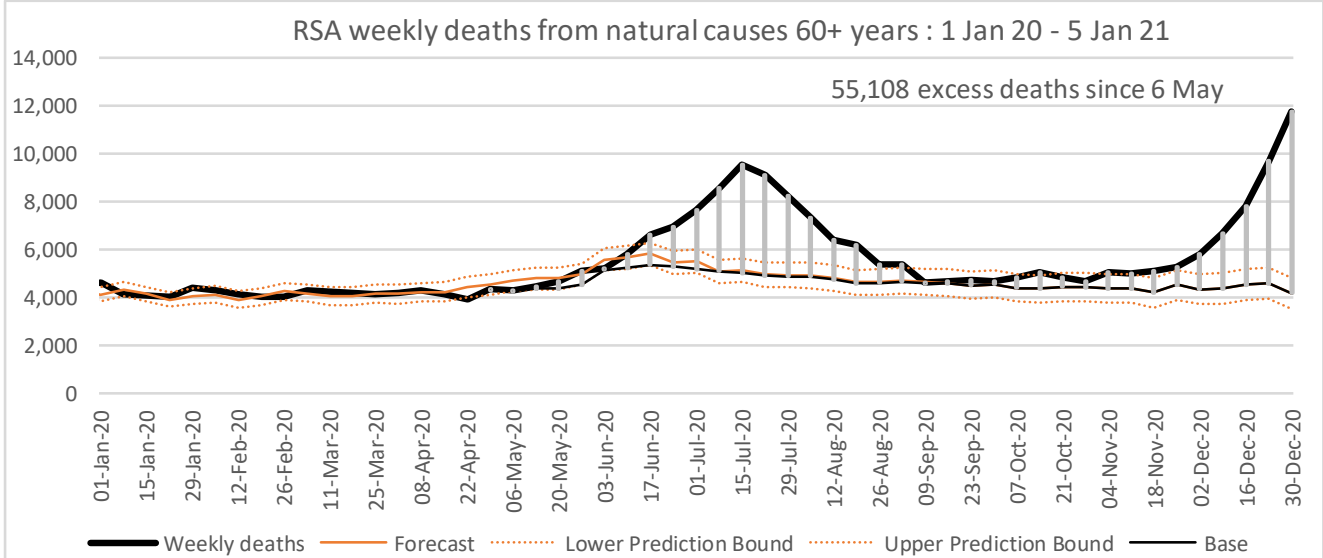
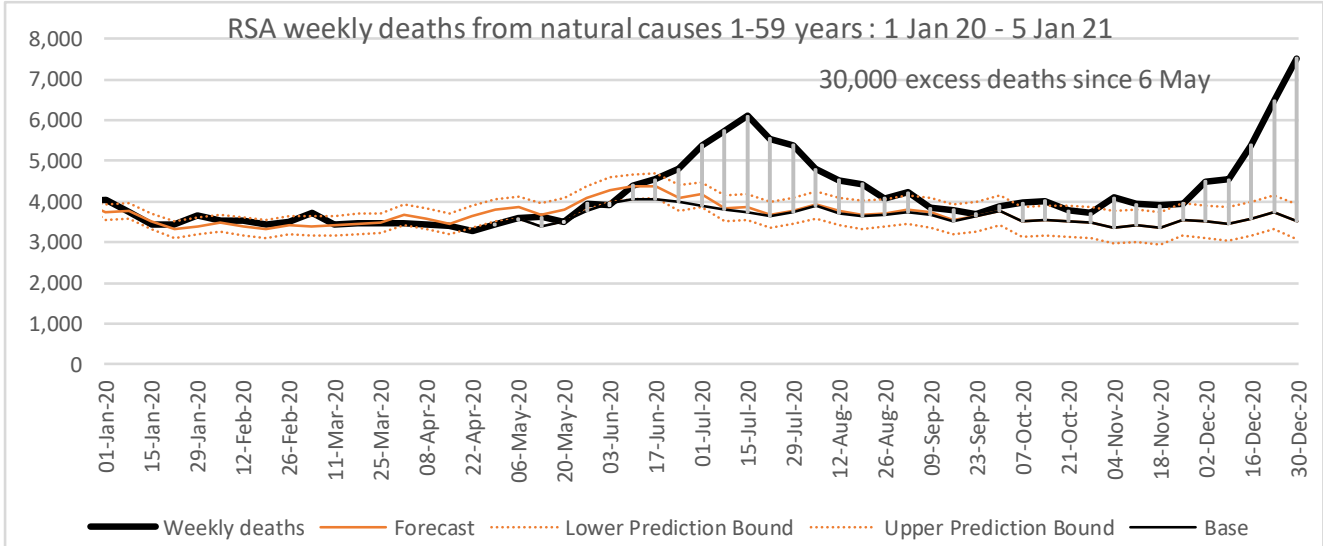
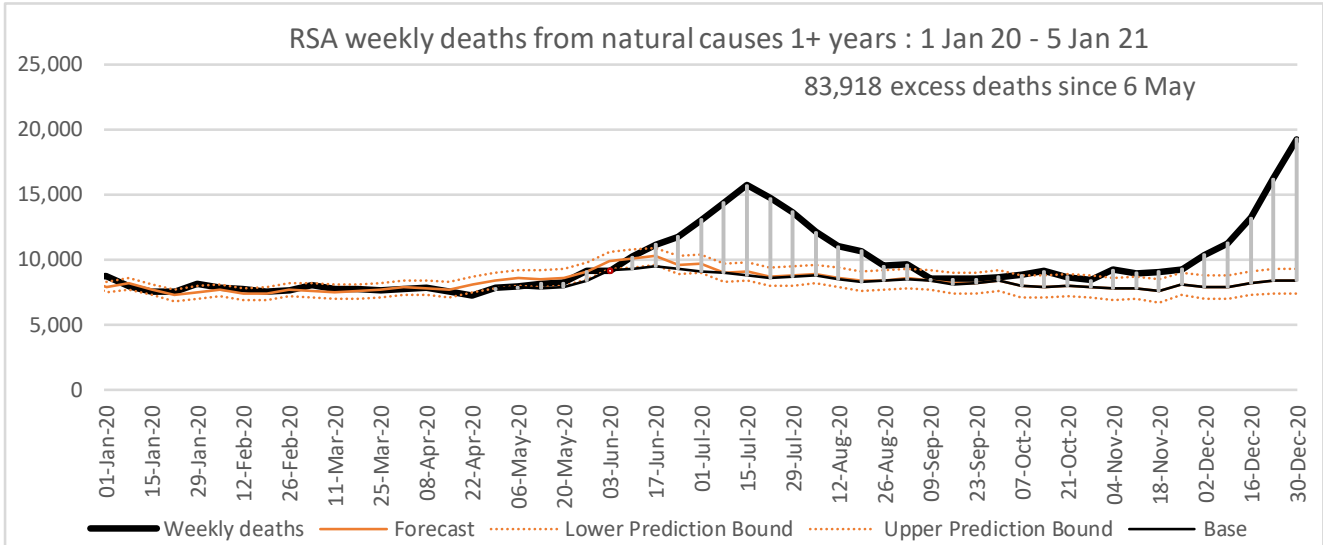
Table 1: Number of excess natural deaths of persons 1+ years by province and metro relative to revised predicted number based on the observed drop during lockdown, South Africa 2020

Region	Period	Excess deaths vs revised base
South Africa	6 May – 5 January	83,918
Province		
Eastern Cape	3 June – 5 January	25,065
Free State	24 June – 5 January	5,394
Gauteng	10 June – 5 January	16,003
KwaZulu-Natal	10 June – 5 January	15,604
Limpopo	24 June – 5 January	3,461
Mpumalanga	24 June – 5 January	4,120
Northern Cape	1 July – 5 January	2,124
North West	1 July – 5 January	3,550
Western Cape	6 May – 5 January	11,563
Metropolitan Municipality		
Buffalo City	3 June – 5 January	2,888
City of Cape Town	6 May – 5 January	7,904
Ekhuruleni	10 June – 5 January	4,554
Ethikweni	17 June – 5 January	3,972
Johannesburg	10 June – 5 January	5,216
Mangaung	24 June – 5 January	1,268
Nelson Mandela Bay	3 June – 5 January	4,696
City of Tshwane	10 June – 5 January	3,309

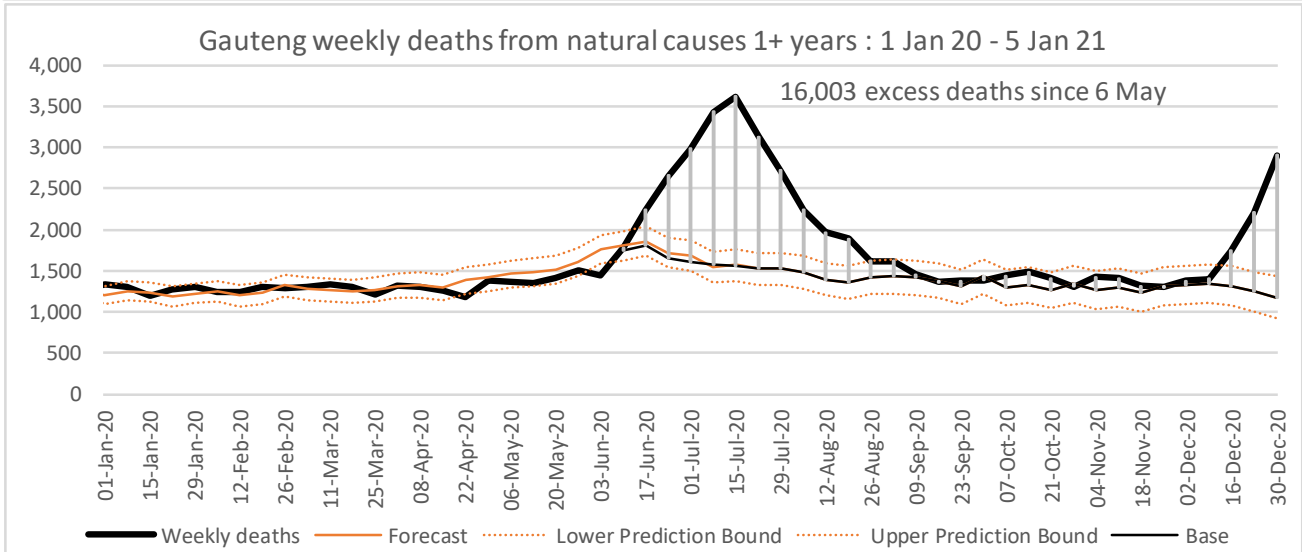
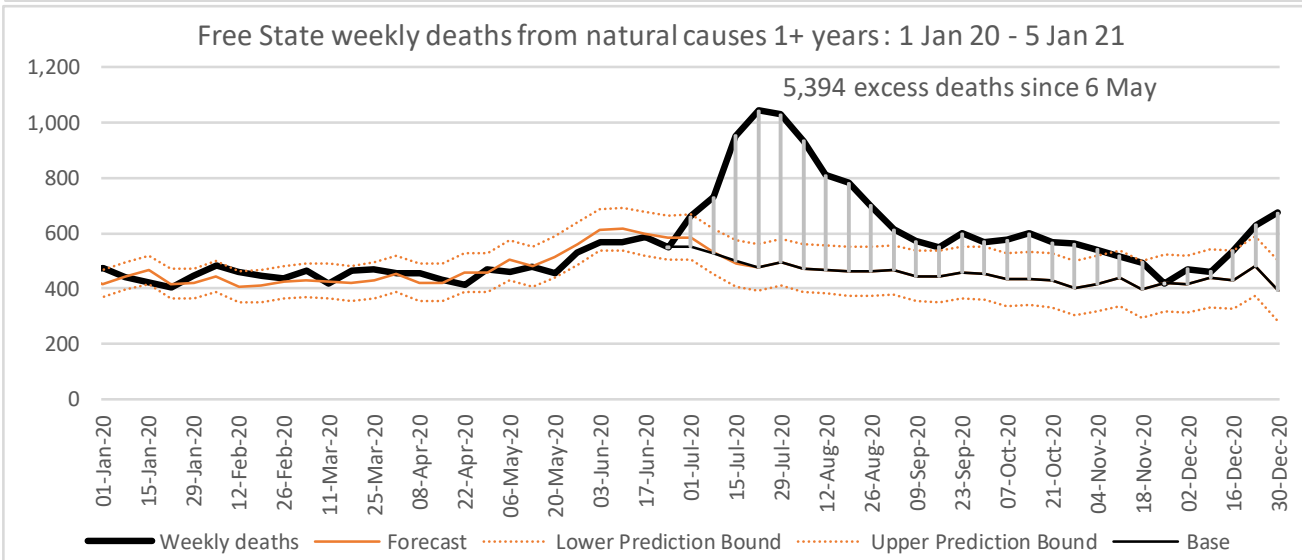
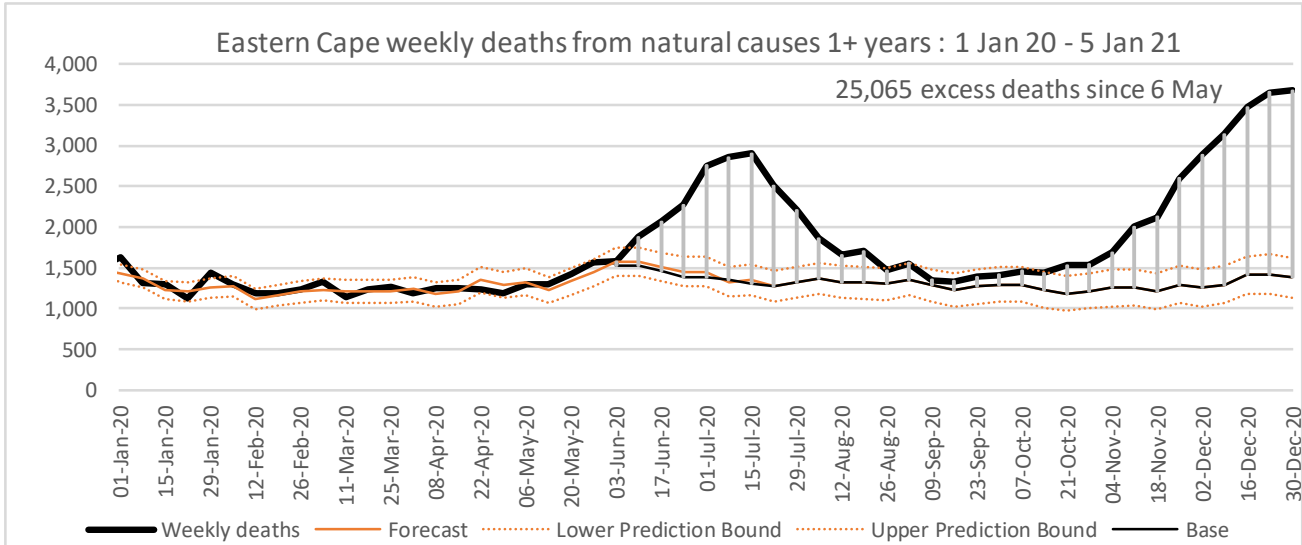
Note: Period has been determined based on when an upturn in the number of natural deaths became apparent. Parts do not sum to the whole because office closures due to Covid-19 may have led to registration of deaths at other offices which may not be in the same area, and random fluctuation at the point at which the baseline is determined.

Table 2: Number of excess deaths from all causes of persons 1+ years by province and metro relative to predicted number based on historical trend, South Africa 2020

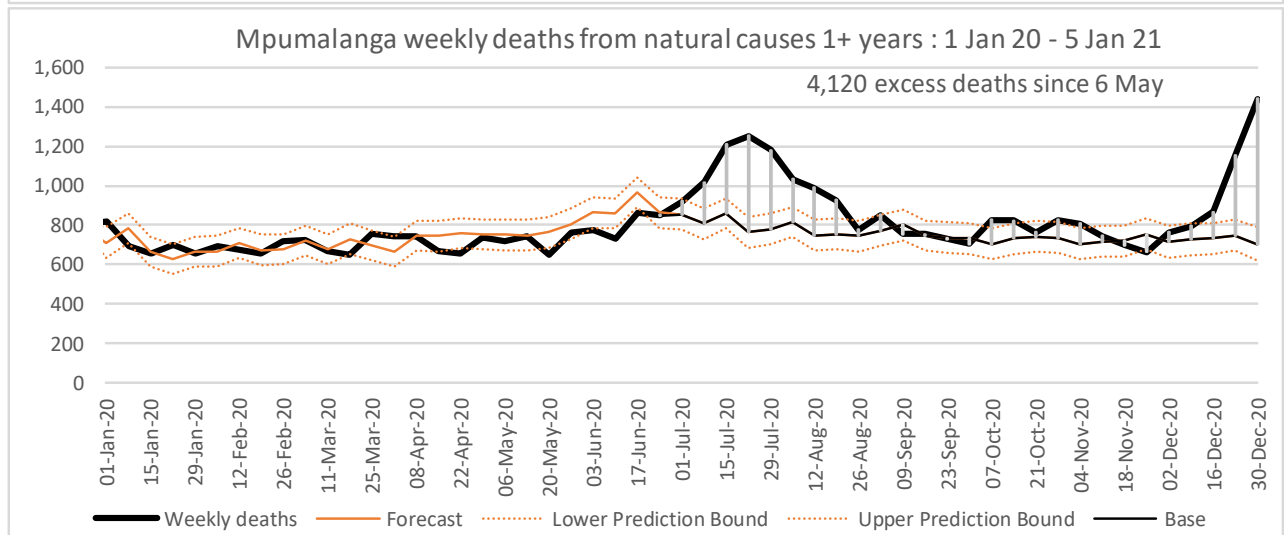
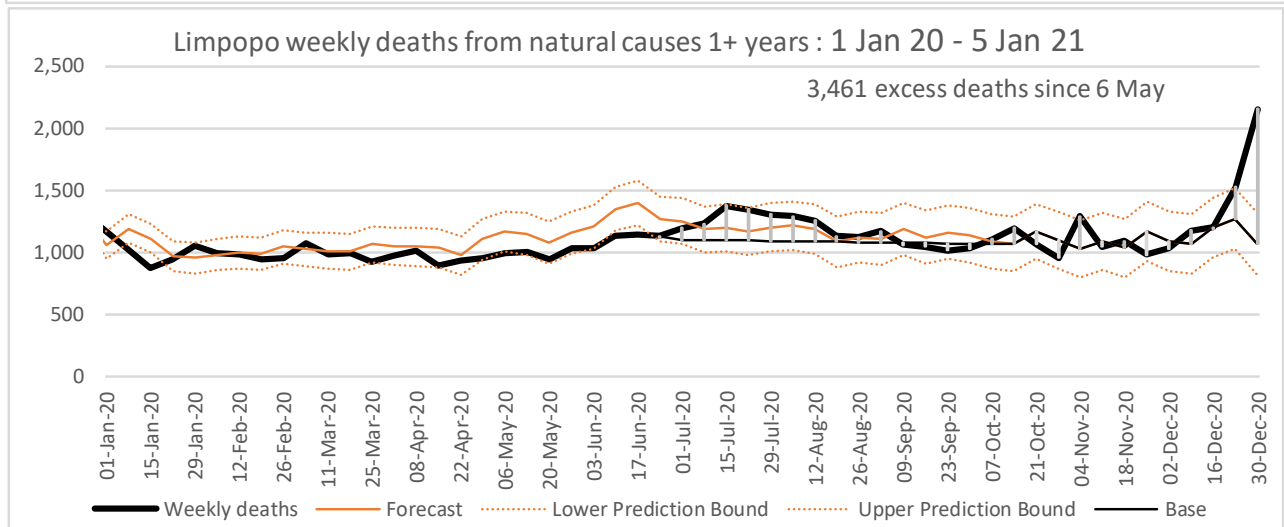
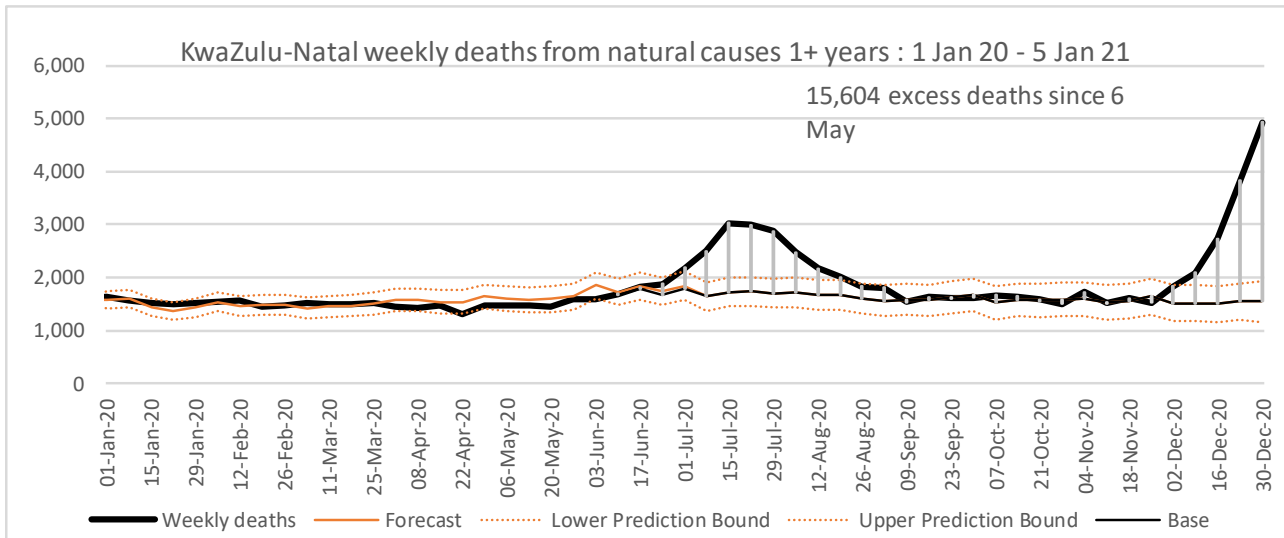
Region	Excess deaths vs forecast
South Africa	78,275
Province	
Eastern Cape	24,777
Free State	5,442
Gauteng	15,246
KwaZulu-Natal	14,828
Limpopo	2,580
Mpumalanga	3,954
Northern Cape	2,197
North West	3,909
Western Cape	10,376
Metropolitan Municipality	
Buffalo City	2,843
City of Cape Town	6,268
Ekhuruleni	4,003
Ethikweni	3,879
Johannesburg	5,072
Mangaung	1,262
Nelson Mandela Bay	4,491
City of Tshwane	3,313



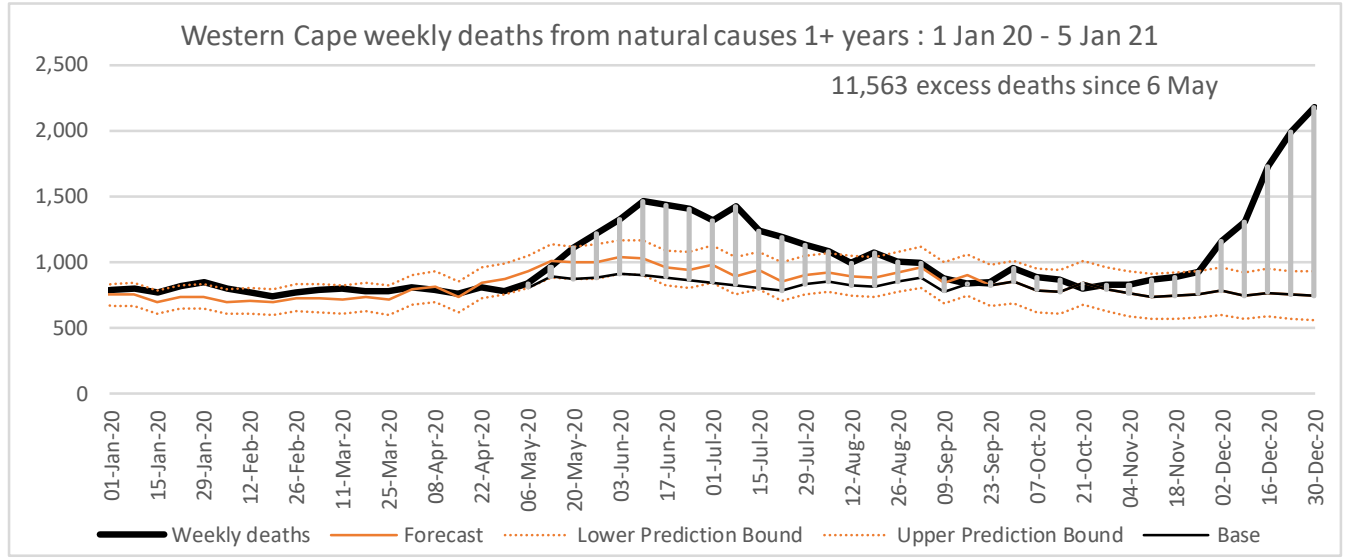
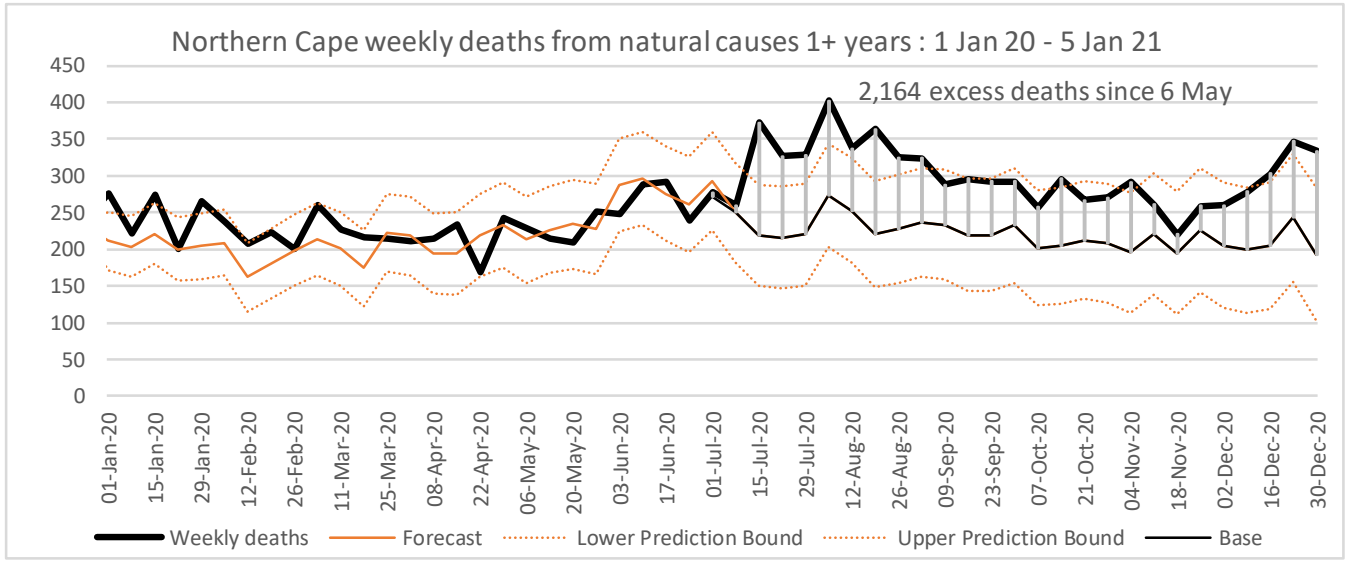
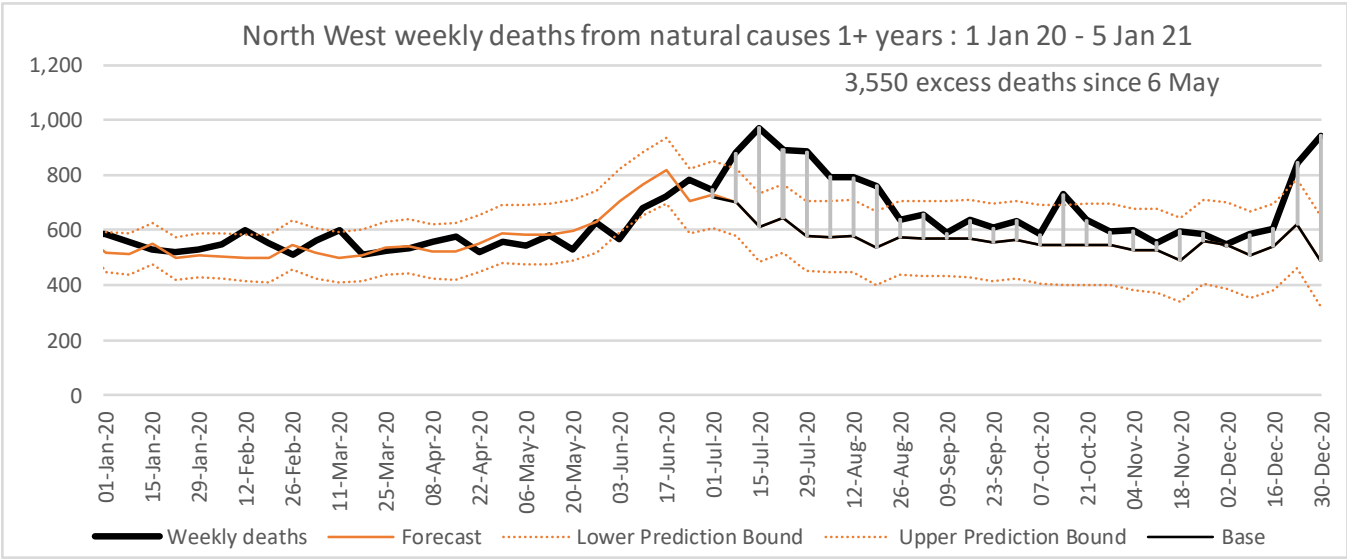
Numbers have been scaled to the estimated actual number of death and for the last week has been adjusted for delayed registrations



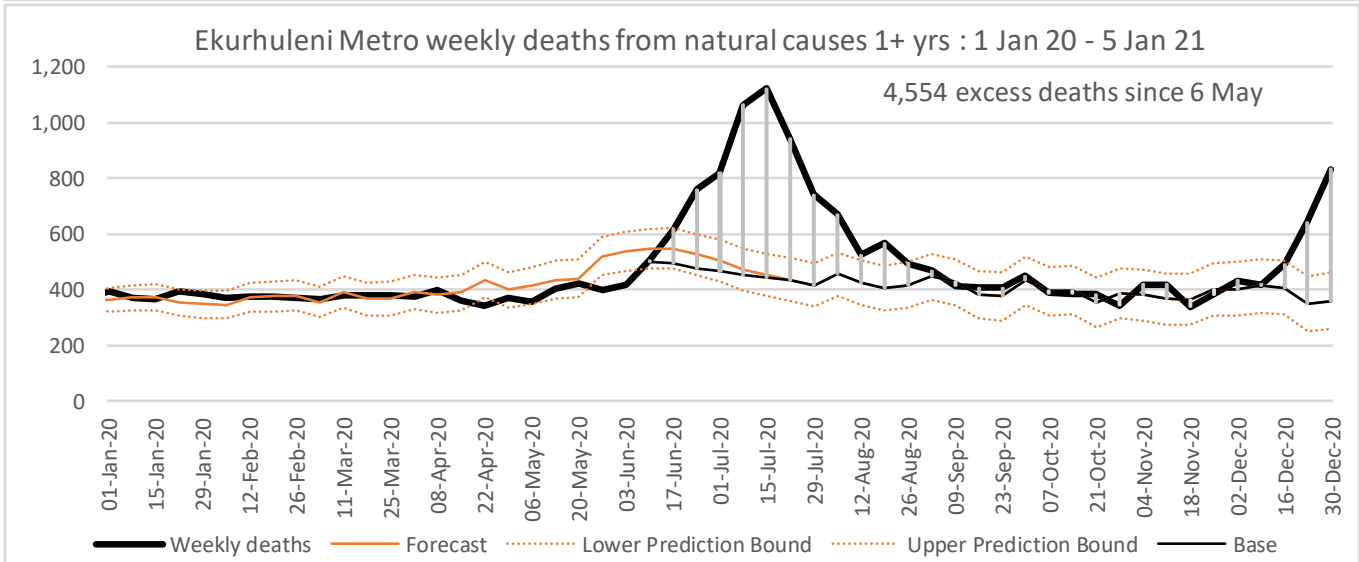
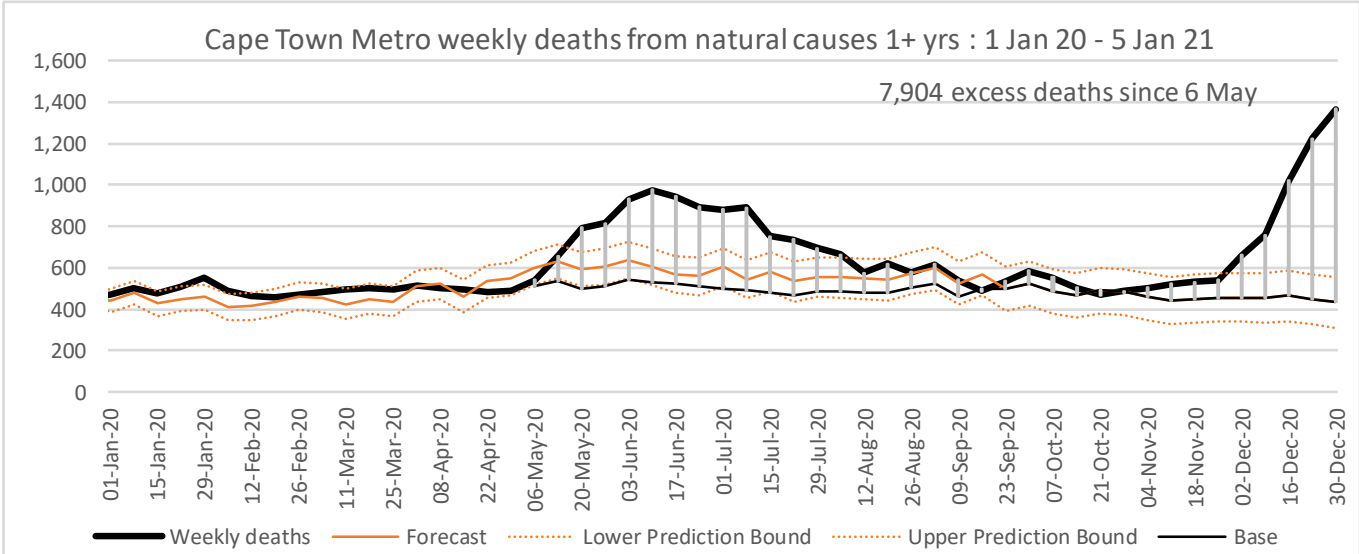
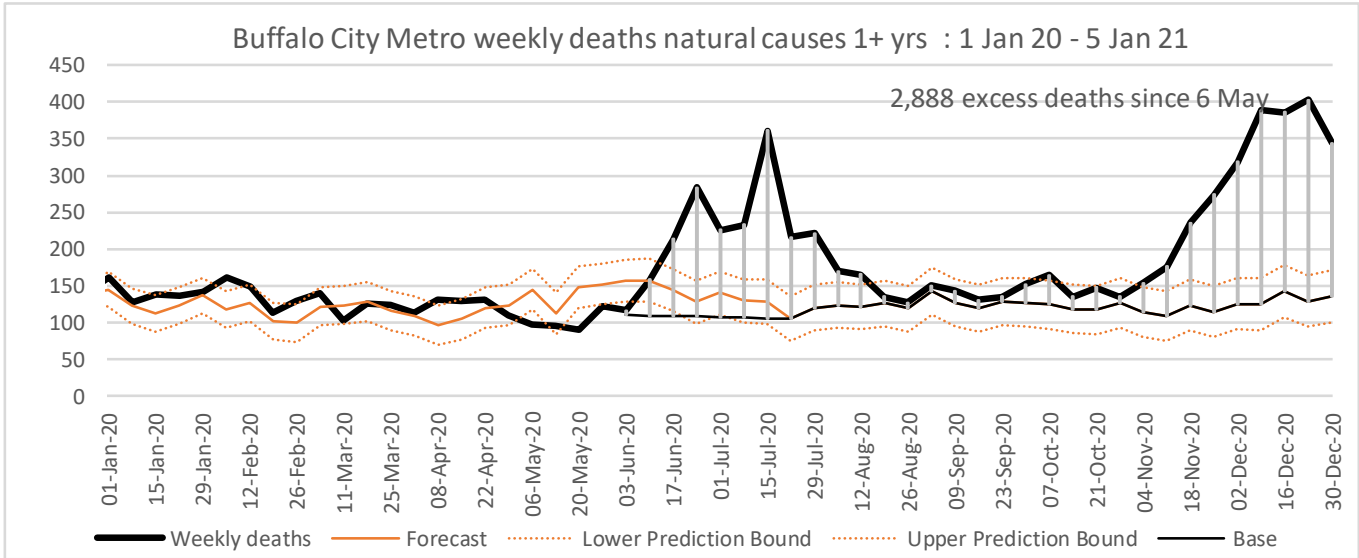
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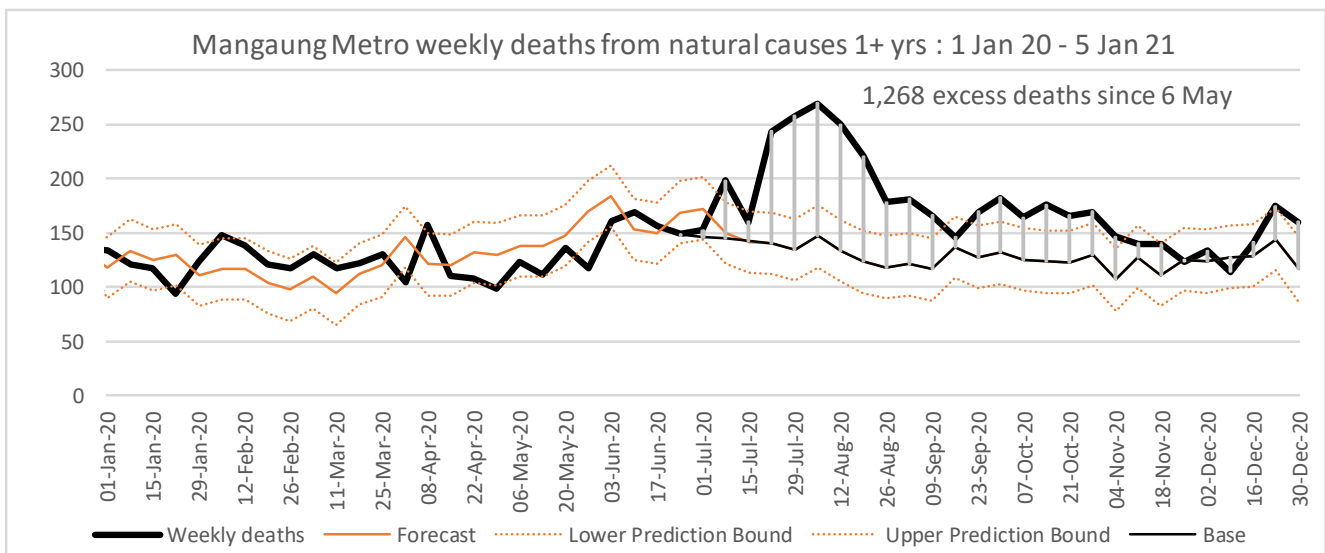
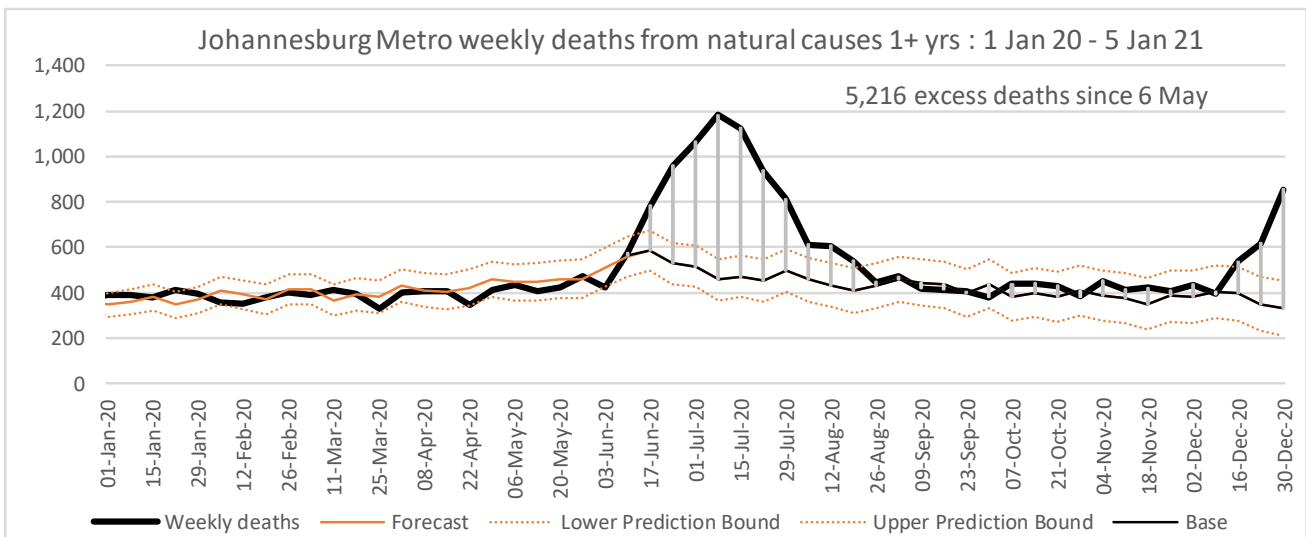
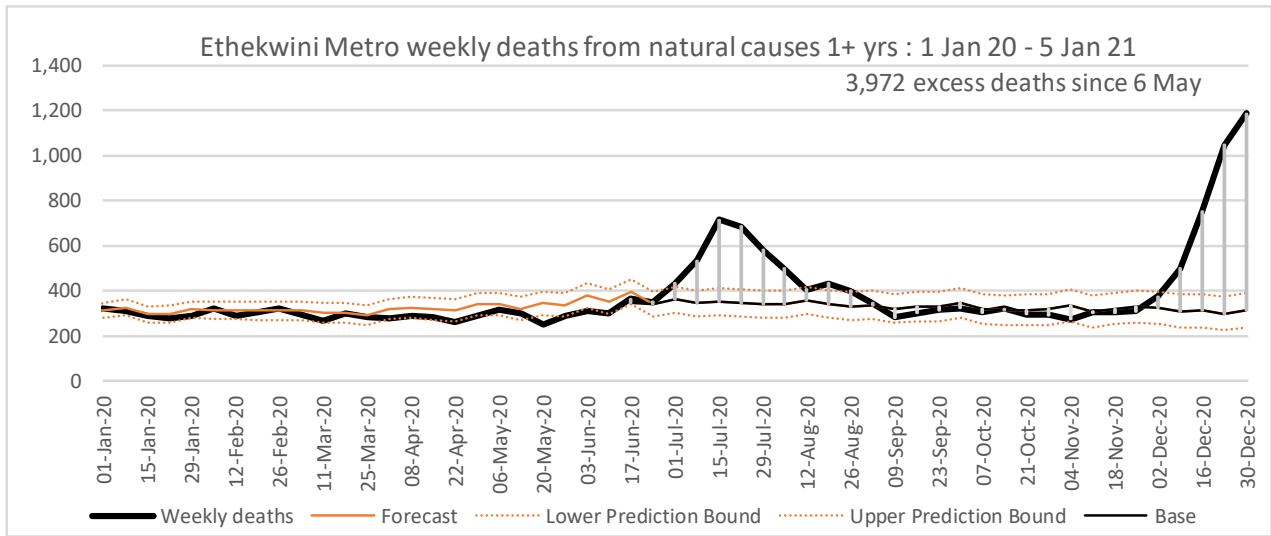
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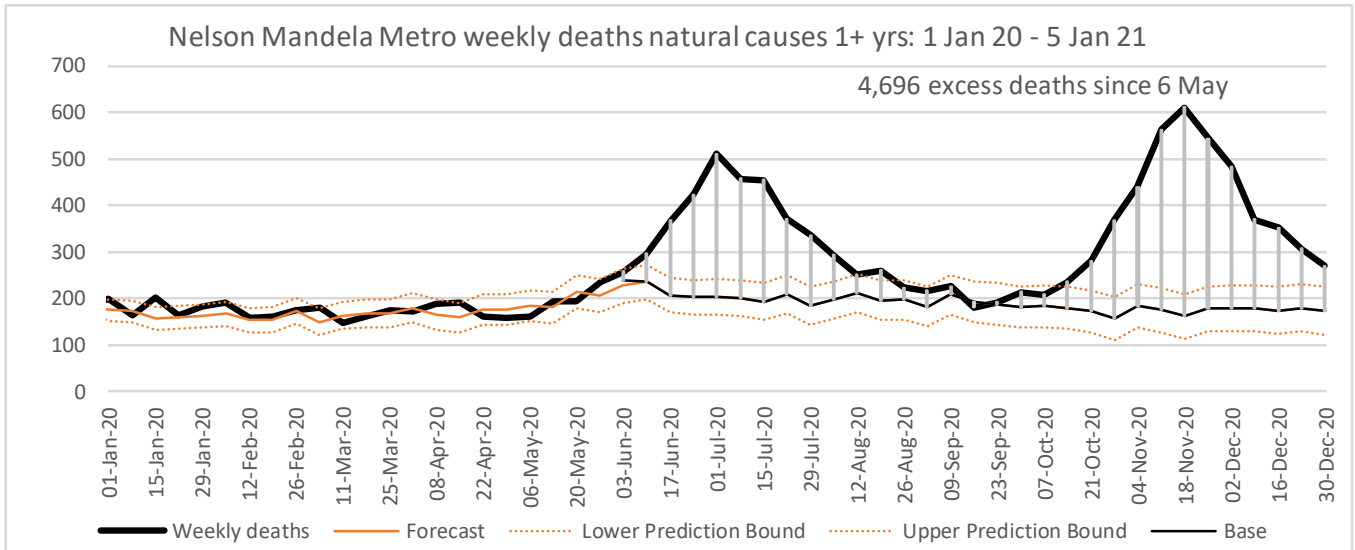
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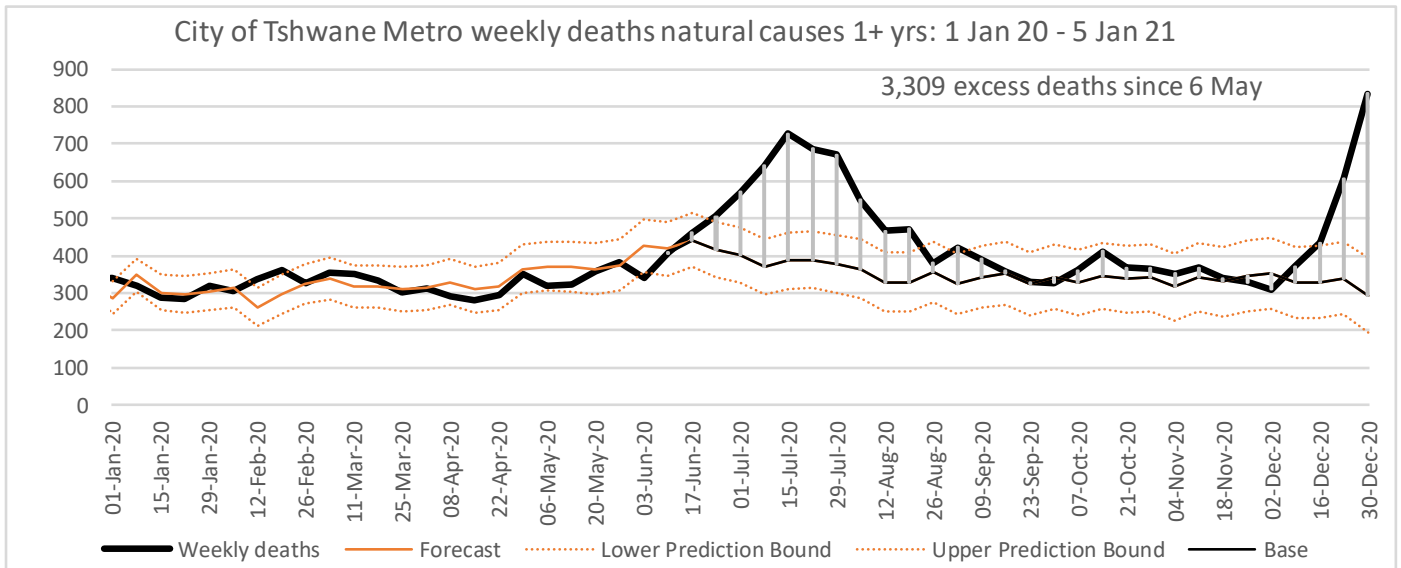
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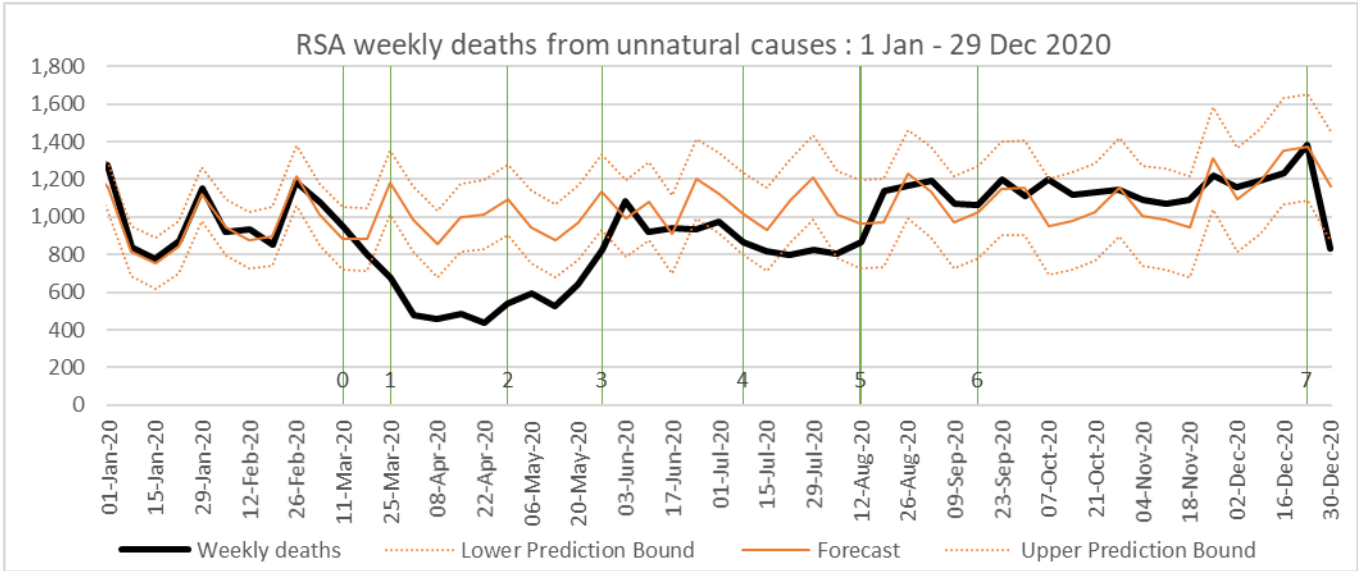
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Vertical lines in order

- 0 Week Disaster Management Act implemented
- 1 Week lockdown level 5 introduced
- 2 Week lockdown changed to level 4, with curfew
- 3 Week lockdown changed to level 3 including unbanning of alcohol
- 4 Week alcohol re-banned and a curfew re-introduced
- 5 Week lockdown changed to level 2, including unbanning of alcohol
- 6 Week lockdown changed to level 1
- 7 Week lockdown changed to level 3 with banning of alcohol

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