

## **Delays in South Africa's plans to ban alcohol advertising.**

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International Transplantation Society has also endorsed the new programme, ethically consistent with international standards.<sup>5</sup>

Clearly, donation after cardiac death has paved the way for substantial societal, cultural, and political progress for organ transplantation in China. However, development of processes for donation after cardiac death in different parts of China remains challenging. Promotion of public awareness about donation after cardiac death is necessary and a national registration for the voluntary donation is underway.

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## Delays in South Africa's plans to ban alcohol advertising

South Africa has very high levels of consumption of alcohol among drinkers, about 6.3% of disability-adjusted life-years lost are attributable

to alcohol, and about 130 deaths are from alcohol-related causes every day.<sup>1</sup> In September, 2013, the South African Cabinet moved forward on its plans to ban alcohol advertising by approving a Control of Marketing of Alcoholic Beverages Bill. This bill, which has not yet been released for public comment, is now subject to a regulatory impact assessment, and reportedly aims to help reduce alcohol-related harm and protect public health through limiting the public's exposure to alcohol marketing by restricting advertising of alcohol products to points of sale, banning sports and arts sponsorships associated with alcohol products, and prohibiting the promotion of alcoholic beverages.

The liquor industry is strongly opposed to the bill and has mobilised interest groups (including the advertising industry, business owners, small entrepreneurs, and marketing commentators) to challenge its merits. Industry criticisms have denied evidence of a link between alcohol advertising and consumption, and argued that an advertising ban is anticompetitive, will have dire consequences for the economy, promote trade in illicit liquor, erode personal freedoms, and hurt the arts and sports development through loss of sponsorships.<sup>2</sup> In response, the government, public health researchers, and advocacy groups have pointed to the evidence supporting a ban.<sup>3</sup>

The stakes are very high. If alcohol advertising is banned in South Africa, bans in neighbouring countries might follow. This would undermine the alcohol industry's efforts to develop new markets targeting women, a group whose drinking rates are generally low in Africa, where SABMiller, the largest brewer in Africa, intends to raise annual beer consumption from 8 to 30 L per person.<sup>4</sup>

The last minute addition of an independent regulatory impact assessment, despite the fact that the Department of Health had already conducted its own regulatory impact assessment, has delayed the legislative process for at least 6 months and mirrors

concerns expressed elsewhere that the way regulatory impact assessments are applied might undermine healthy public policy because of possible corporate influence.<sup>5</sup>

We declare no competing interests.

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