

should facilitate and safeguard health by creating an enabling environment that will ensure sustainable actions at individual, family, community, national and international level, which if implemented simultaneously should reduce the burden of disease and death rates attributable to unhealthy dietary practices.<sup>7</sup>

To delay the onset of lifestyle disorders, the following measures should be implemented:

- Sustained political commitment.
- Multisectoral involvement.
- The active participation of different stakeholders, including nongovernmental organisations.
- Conducting awareness campaigns which target the general population in order to increase understanding of the influence of diet on health.
- Community involvement.
- Training sessions for outreach workers and paramedical workers.
- Customised dietary plans, based on the complex interaction of personal choices, social norms, economic constraints and environmental factors.<sup>4,7</sup>

Further broad-scale, community-based studies should be planned to obtain scientific evidence and a better understanding of what different groups of people understand by the term “a balanced diet” in order to improve longevity and the outcome of lifestyle disorders.<sup>3,7</sup>

To conclude, no single food can take care of all the essential nutrients that the body requires to stay healthy. Thus, consuming a diet that

is diverse within the context of individual affordability is of extreme significance for the maintenance of health and a reduction in the incidence of lifestyle disorders.

#### Conflict of interest

There is no conflict of interest to be declared.

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## NSSA newsbits

Prof Carin Napier was re-elected as chairperson of the Eastern branch of Nutrition Society of South Africa (NSSA) for 2013-2014. Lenore Spies is the treasurer; Christine Broadhurst, the secretary; and Thobe Dlamuka, Heleen Grobbelaar, Christelle Crickmore and Justine Casey, the other committee members.

The Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) launched a published report, *A consensus study on improved nutritional assessment of micronutrients, July 2013* on Wednesday, 14 August 2013 in Johannesburg. The launch formed part of the InterAcademy Medical Panel (IAMP) conference gala dinner. Six key micronutrients (vitamin A, vitamin D, folate, selenium, iron and zinc), which have been shown to contribute to the malnutrition micronutrient malnutrition” in South Africa, were selected for an in-depth study. The national study panel members were Profs John Pettifor (chair), Este Vorster, Ali Dhansay,

Wieland Gevers, Salome Kruger, Xikombiso Mbhenyane, Barry Mendelow and Dr Namukolo Covic. The international panel members were Profs Tola Atinmo, Jack Metz and Michael Zimmermann. The report is freely available on the ASSAf website at <http://www.assaf.co.za/>

Prof Demetre Labadarios of the Human Sciences Research Council also presented the results from the South African National Health And Nutrition Examination Survey 2012 (SANHANES-1) that pertain to noncommunicable diseases at the IAMP Scientific Conference and General Assembly. The high prevalence of obesity in women, the consumption of food that is high in fat and sugar in a significant segment of the population, regular snacking while drinking alcohol and low levels of fitness in adults were of concern.

The next Association for Dietetics in South Africa (ADSA)/NSSA Nutrition Congress will be held from 17-19 September 2014 at the Birchwood Conference Centre, Johannesburg. NSSA members are invited to highlight topics that they wish to be included in the scientific programme by e-mailing Kim Upton at [admin@easternsun.co.za](mailto:admin@easternsun.co.za) by 30 August. Access to the official congress website will be via [www.nutritioncongress.co.za](http://www.nutritioncongress.co.za)