



## NSSA newsbits

### Are we making progress with South Africa's salt reduction strategy?

On 2 September 2016, Ali Dhansay represented the Nutrition Society of South Africa (NSSA) at a multi-sectoral meeting hosted by the Heart and Stroke Foundation South Africa (HSFSA) to discuss progress, challenges and the way forward for South Africa's (SA) salt reduction strategy.

Participants acknowledged that SA is playing a leading role in salt reduction globally, but that effective monitoring is key to assess the impact of the salt legislation on salt intake and related health outcomes.

Jacqui Webster, Director of the WHO Collaborating Centre on Population Salt Reduction at the George Institute for Global Health, Australia, presented on the effectiveness of salt reduction programmes globally and confirmed that there is adequate evidence to support the need to reduce salt in order to increase positive health outcomes. SA's salt reduction policy could potentially reduce 11% of deaths from heart disease per year and result in approximately R 713 million savings in healthcare costs per year.

Karen Charlton from the University of Wollongong, Australia, and Bianca Swanepoel from North-West University, presented new data on salt intake indicating that South Africans are consuming salt in excess of the World Health Organisation's recommended 5 g per day. The data confirm previous salt intake estimations and provide further support for the government's salt reduction strategy.

Five priority areas were identified as a roadmap for salt reduction for 2017 and beyond. First of these was the need to support industry compliance with the existing legislation and increase efforts to prepare for the 2019 legislative thresholds. The second was to identify the contribution to salt intake of foods eaten outside the home and developing an appropriate strategy to address this issue. The third priority was implementing the next stage of the Salt Watch public education and awareness campaign to influence consumer behaviours. Key messages should be identified that could be integrated into broader health communication strategies, for example, the Food-based Dietary Guidelines. The fourth priority was ensuring that salt reduction efforts do not inadvertently widen health inequalities based on affordability. Lastly, additional funds are required for research and monitoring in order to build capacity to continue to monitor changes in salt intake and salt-related behaviours. This may include integration of salt intake monitoring into national surveys and identifying opportunities to measure children's salt intake.

The SA legislation to limit salt levels in processed foods, combined with public health education, is an example of what a steadfast government can do to improve health at a population level. The NSSA remains committed to support government and the HSFSA in taking the global lead in salt reduction.

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For the full report contact [gabriel@heartfoundation.co.za](mailto:gabriel@heartfoundation.co.za)

### Erratum - NSSA Junior Scientist Awards, Nutrition Congress 2016

In the previous issue of the SAJCN the names of the awardees of the *NSSA Junior Scientist Awards* were unfortunately switched around.

During the Nutrition Congress that was held in Somerset West, 3–5 September 2016, the Nutrition Society Award given to a junior scientist for the best oral presentation was presented to Mariaan Wicks for her paper *Comparing food classification of various nutrient profiling models to the opinions of South Africans dietitians*. Marinka van der Hoeven was the runner-up and received the second prize for her paper *Consumption of locally produced foods in South Africa; a qualitative inquiry of women's perceptions*.