



NSSA Cape Branch World Hypertension Day Webinar

On the 17th of May, World Hypertension Day, the NSSA Cape branch presented a webinar to showcase multiple researchers' work concerning hypertension. As with most health issues there is a need for multi-faceted interventions to reduce the prevalence of hypertension through various strategies. As such, an array of webinar speakers, who are hypertension expert professionals, covered a wide range of topics including: chronic kidney disease prevalence in Africa, the mandatory sodium regulation of foods in South Africa, blood pressure surveillance techniques in Mpumalanga and blood pressure reducing effect of physical activity.

Dr Cindy George explained how African countries have improved research collaboration around chronic kidney disease (CKD), of which she is at the forefront, and how this may assist in creating a common measurement of CKD to make it easier to compare research from various countries and improve monitoring of CKD.

Ms Tamryn Frank and Ms Safura Abdool-Karim discussed the lessons learnt through evaluating the mandatory sodium regulation, R.214. It became clear that even though South Africa has been progressive in their regulation of sodium, monitoring and evaluation capacity of the government to manage compliance with these laws is limited. Importantly, the sodium regulation is being implemented, and mostly being adhered to according to the food

labels that have been analysed. This research is in the process of being published and we look forward to reading more about it.

Ms Jane Simmonds and Dr Georgina Pujol-Busquets Guillén described an ongoing intervention called "Know your numbers" where blood pressure is measured in elderly people (aged >60 years) that are queuing for their social grant pensions. They incorporated a song, pamphlets and blood pressure recording cards, as well as referral to clinics, and education on how to reduce their blood pressure, if needed. The qualitative results indicated that the elderly participants appreciated the assistance and indicated that the researchers are caring and provide their blood pressure results immediately after taking it.

Lastly, Prof. Wayne Derman presented a talk on lifestyle effects on hypertension. He explained that as little as ten minutes of moderate physical activity can reduce a person's blood pressure as soon as the next day! Prof. Derman emphasised that this is especially true for people with high blood pressure, with an increased beneficial effect for those with higher blood pressures. He shared that people should aim for moderate fitness training 5-7 days per week and to include 2-3 days of resistance and flexibility training for about 30-60 minutes at a time. By implementing only a little bit of exercise both diastolic and systolic blood pressure are reduced due to various mechanisms of the nervous system and muscles.

One of our participants gave us wonderful feedback saying: "Thank you for giving multiple people access to this great information, at no cost! I know people don't want to pay a lot of money to attend an online event. Thanks for really one of the best webinars I attended his year."

Marieke Theron, Chairperson of the NSSA Cape Branch, would like to thank all the participants, speakers and the members of the NSSA Cape Branch for their assistance in making this a successful webinar.

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