

## Editor's note

The current issue of the *SAJCN* reflects on three significant elements in the growth of nutrition in the country. Firstly, a new Chief Directorate: Health Promotion and Nutrition has been created in the national Department of Health. Chief Director, Ms Moeng Mahlangu, writes: "The primary healthcare reengineering process has already laid a strong foundation for improving the health of South Africans through the involvement of communities, and the need to implement evidence-based interventions to guide programming is of paramount importance". The *SAJCN* congratulates Ms Moeng Mahlangu, and offers its support to the Chief Directorate's future challenges of addressing national priorities for the further development of Nutrition and Dietetics in the country, as well as improving the nutritional status of the nation.

Secondly, an extensive supplement to the current issue of the *SAJCN* on the revised food-based dietary guidelines (FBDGs) is published. This important milestone will help guide Nutrition and Dietetics practitioners in their daily practices, and in educating the public at large on healthy and evidence-based approaches to healthy eating, choices and practices. This useful tool addresses "both dietary adequacy and prudence. When the dietary recommendations are followed, the result should lead to optimum nutrition, commensurate with optimum physical and mental development, a lowered risk of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), and health and well-being throughout the life course", writes guest supplement editor, Prof Este Vorster. One hopes that the FBDGs will receive the necessary support, resource-wise, in order for this common and noble goal to be achieved in the country.

The third development is the ministerial launch of the first South African National Health And Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES-1):

"The South African NHANES project combines longitudinal, as well as cross-sectional design elements. A prospective cohort approach addresses the relationships between medical, nutritional and behavioural or societal risk factors ... and subsequent morbidity, mortality and changes in risk factors at national level. The first South African NHANES, SANHANES-1, provides critical information to map the emerging epidemic of NCDs in South Africa, and analyses their social, economic, behavioural and environmental determinants. Data on the magnitude of and trends in NCDs, as well as other existing or emerging health priorities, are essential for developing national prevention and control programmes, assessing the impact of interventions and evaluating the health status of the country".<sup>1</sup>

The survey, primarily a health survey, encapsulates nutrition within the greater context of health, and affords the opportunity of providing regular and up-to-date information on the health and nutritional status of all South Africans. The print edition of the SANHANES-1 report will shortly be released.

**Prof Demetre Labadarios**

Editor-in-Chief: *SAJCN*

### References

1. Shisana O, Labadarios D, Rehle T, et al. South African National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey. Cape Town: HSRC Press; 2012.