

News from the Nutrition Society



Local experts continue global drive to improve SA's fat intake

Recently Professor Marius Smuts, member of the Nutrition Society of SA Council and Associate Professor at the Centre of Excellence in Nutrition at the North-West University's Potchefstroom campus convened a meeting of South African nutrition experts on the critical importance of fat quality in the diet, as part of a global campaign under the auspices of the International Union of Nutritional Sciences. The meeting followed an International Expert Meeting on Health Significance of Fat Quality in the Diet in Barcelona, with 40 experts from 25 countries. Professor Rina Swart, President of the Nutrition Society Council attended the South African meeting as a panel member and local guidelines and recommendations for an optimal fat quality of the diet were formulated based on international recommendations:

- Fat may provide up to 30% of the daily energy intake. There should be a balance between energy intake and energy expenditure. Saturated fat should provide no more than 10% of the daily energy intake and in those at risk of cardiovascular disease the intake should be less than 7% of energy;
- Polyunsaturated fats, including essential fats, should contribute 6-10 % of the daily energy intake with omega-6 providing 5-8% of energy and omega-3 1-2% of daily energy;
- The remainder of the energy from fat will be provided by mono-unsaturated fats;
- The intake of trans fats should be less than 1% of the daily energy intake.

Substantial benefits can be achieved when simple dietary changes are made:

- Exchanging full fat dairy products with low fat choices
- Exchanging fatty meats with lean meat and chicken without the skin
- Using vegetable oil rather than saturated animal fats or partially hydrogenated vegetable oils/fats in food preparation and food products
- Fish is a good source of the omega-3 fats and should be included regularly in the diet.

Northern branch Public Health Nutrition symposium

The Northern branch of NSSA is planning a Public Health Nutrition symposium on 20 and 21 August at the North-West University

on the Potchefstroom campus. Dr Pieter Jooste of the Medical Research Council and dr Edelweiss Wentzel-Viljoen have both been appointed as Honorary Professors at the Centre of Excellence of the North-West University and they will be invited speakers on nutritional epidemiology and food and nutrition policy, respectively. Chantell Witten of the Medical Research Council has been invited to speak on planning and management of community-based nutrition programmes and Johann Jerling will present on the public health nutrition cycle.

Western Cape Branch

The Western Cape Branch of the Nutrition Society of South Africa (NSSA) hosted a half-day mini-symposium on "Ethics in Nutrition" on 11 February 2009. This symposium was held at the University of Stellenbosch, Tygerberg Campus in Parow and brought together scientists, nutritionists, dietitians, policy planners, students and other key role players. The overall aim was to stimulate dialogue aimed at ethical practices during nutritional intervention.

The symposium was a great success and received a good response with more than 50 delegates from academia, tertiary institutions, food industry and the private sector.

Three keynote speakers from academia and the MRC shared their views on nutrition-related issues with respect to ethics.

The topics included the following:

- *Nutrition interventions in rural communities – ethical issues* by Dr Mieke Faber
- *A Research Ethics Update* by Dr Lyn Horn
- *Nutrition and the use of animals: the ethical issues* by Prof David Benatar

The organizing committee wishes to thank the University of Stellenbosch for providing the venue to host the symposium. It is hoped that with further financial support such a symposium could be organized on a yearly basis.

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