



## ADSA Gauteng South Workshop: The diet & lifestyle inflammatory link with chronic disease

**“Let thy food be thy medicine and thy medicine be thy food.”**

*The new committee of the ADSA Gauteng South branch kicked off its first event on the 4<sup>th</sup> of September with a workshop sponsored by DSM Nutritionals. Ninety dietitians attended the workshop at Sportron House and had the opportunity to hear from well known dietitian Anne Till on the relationship between oxidative stress, inflammation and chronic disease.*

Oxidative stress and inflammation linked to diet occur primarily as postprandial inflammation. This can be affected by the energy value of a meal, glycaemic index, glycaemic load and

the lipid profile of a meal. A higher energy meal with a high glycaemic load and rich in triglycerides and saturated fats are thought to trigger postprandial inflammation. Polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFAs) appear to be the most important modulators of the postprandial inflammatory response. The ratio of n-3 and n-6 PUFAs is important as n-3 suppresses postprandial inflammation while n-6 promotes it.

Clinical evidence suggests that overproduction of free radicals linked to oxidative stress and inflammation may play an integral role in the development of insulin resistance, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and other chronic conditions.—Diet and lifestyle factors remain central components in the prevention and management of the so called chronic disease of lifestyle.

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## Academy of Science gold medal for prominent UKZN scientist



Professor Anna Coutsoudis has been recognised as one of South Africa's top scientists by the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAF). Coutsoudis has been awarded the prestigious annual Science-for-Society Gold Medal. She is one of only two awardees.

Coutsoudis is a public health scientist who is a Professor in the Department of Paediatrics and Child Health at the Nelson R Mandela School of Medicine at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. These studies have influenced international and national policies on vitamin A supplementation in children.

She also established, for the first time, the association between non-exclusive breastfeeding and increased risk of mother-to-child transmission of HIV. Her work was instrumental in influencing changes in the UNAIDS/WHO/UNICWF guidelines on HIV and Infant Feeding Policies.

Coutsoudis is the founder and chairperson of two major initiatives that have directly impacted on the wider South African community: the first is iThemba Lethu, a transitional home for orphaned and abandoned babies in Durban that places and integrates babies into families, and the second, is

the establishment of the iThemba Lethu Breast Milk Bank – an innovative initiative that provides immune boosting breast milk to babies. In order to regulate and provide guidance on human milk banking in South Africa she was instrumental in setting up the Human Milk Banking Association of South Africa and is the current chairperson.

Coutsoudis said she was thrilled to receive the ASSAF Science for Society gold medal. “It is recognition of the value that ASSAF places on applying scientific thinking in the service of society. I have been privileged to work on health issues that affect the most vulnerable of our society, viz. the mothers and children and our work has shown the importance of looking for appropriate interventions that can make a difference to the health of children as well as the importance of considering the psycho-social aspects of health. Research is never a one man/woman show and I could not have done this work without my colleagues in the Department of Paediatrics and Child Health and especially the lay counsellors who have worked with me in our community projects,” said Coutsoudis.

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## Look & Feel Good Expo

The Association of Dietetics for South Africa (ADSA) was a proud exhibitor at the Look & Feel Good Expo, which took place from 9th-11th October 2009 at the Coca-Cola Dome in Johannesburg. This was one of South Africa's first, all-encompassing premium health, wellness and lifestyle events, which was estimated to have hosted 16 000 visitors.

The volunteering dietitians that represented ADSA at the Expo did health risk assessments, addressed nutrition-related queries (which promote nutrition and lifestyle practices that are contrary to what is recommended by dietitians) and educated the public on the services dietitians offer. All in all, the ADSA stand created an improved awareness of the dietetics profession as a whole.

While an expo of this magnitude can prove to be quite costly, we believe our presence there gave dietitians invaluable exposure to people who are in need of expert advice. Today, so many are caught up in this fast-paced and pressured lifestyle that they are often faced with the temptation of opting for a damaging quick-fix; however, with the right guidance and support, people can make more informed and healthier choices.

**Written by : Christine Peters (RD)**



Professor Esté Vorster, director of the Centre of Excellence for Nutrition at the North-West University was appointed as consultant by the World Health Organization to develop a manual for regional and country-specific Food-Based Dietary Guidelines (FBDG). She visited Muscat, Oman in October 2007. She reviewed the completed steps of the FBDG and provided recommendations on implementation. The FBDG manual was field-tested by Professor Vorster in Sri Lanka (Colombo) and Maldives in June/July 2009 during interactive workshops and focus group discussions. She then also visited Kathmandu, Nepal in October 2009, with assistance to implement the FBDG manual. This manual will eventually be tested in 5 countries. Professor Vorster will be visiting Oman again in November 2009.

At the International Congress of Nutrition during October 2009 in Bangkok, Professors Esté Vorster, Pieter Jooste and Johann Jerling were invited speakers in symposia on Carbohydrates: Continuing Controversies, Correction of Iodine Deficiency in Populations and Africa Highlights, respectively. Pieter Jooste was also an invited speaker in the session: Interactions within the double burden of malnutrition.