



health

Department:  
Health  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

28 February 2020

## Non-communicable diseases – identifying knowledge gaps and healthcare implementation challenges

4 March 2020 | 08:30 | Lord Charles Hotel, Somerset West

The South African Department of Health in collaboration with the Collaboration for Evidence-Based Healthcare and Public Health in Africa (CEBHA+) project will host a research symposium on non-communicable diseases (NCDs) at the Lord Charles Hotel in Somerset West on 4 March 2020.

Health Minister Dr Zweli Mkhize will deliver the plenary address at 14:00 and will be accompanied by Deputy Director-General Dr Yogan Pillay. **Media colleagues are invited to attend the symposium – see programme attached for a detailed list of speakers and topics.**

World Obesity Day is also marked on this day to highlight the rising challenge of the many NCDs that are related to increasing obesity levels globally.

“NCDs account for 71% of all deaths globally,” said Naomi Levitt of the Chronic Diseases Initiative for Africa at the University of Cape Town. “Amongst these, four diseases – heart disease, cancer, respiratory diseases, and diabetes – are responsible for more than four out of every five premature NCD deaths. In sub-Saharan Africa there has been a considerable increase in the burden of NCDs over the past 20 years, with most cases occurring in working-age people. NCDs are set to become the leading cause of death in sub-Saharan Africa by 2030.”

The rise in NCDs in South Africa constitutes a substantial disease burden and challenge for healthcare implementation policies and practices.

“The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognises NCDs as a major challenge for sustainable development,” said Sandhya Singh, of the National Department of Health. “Evidence-informed decision making is central to addressing the NCD Agenda as a means to advance progress to achieving the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) throughout the continent.”

“Policy decisions impact on the lives of many people,” added Dr Tamara Kredo of Cochrane SA. “It is therefore critical that they are based on the best-available research evidence of what works, what may not work and what may do harm. This ensures the most effective and cost-effective treatments can be included in policy to improve healthcare services and systems.”

The symposium will bring together researchers, policy makers and practitioners to exchange knowledge on the prevention and treatment of NCDs; identify knowledge gaps; and discuss the implications for policy and practice.

“The symposium will create a platform for engagement, networking, and dialogue,” said Professor Taryn Young, executive head of the Department of Global Health and director of the Centre for Evidence-based Health Care at Stellenbosch University. “It will provide an opportunity to share public health research on prevention and treatment of diabetes, high blood pressure (hypertension), heart disease risk factors, and related mental health conditions; discuss implications for healthcare policy and practices; and identify the gaps in the knowledge base.”

### **About CEBHA+**

The goal of the CEBHA+ project is to build long-term capacity and infrastructure for evidence-based healthcare and public health in sub-Saharan Africa. CEBHA+ adopts a population perspective, encompassing disease prevention and care delivery. The research contributes to achieving many of the SDGs, especially Goal 3. In South Africa, the three CEBHA+ partners are the Chronic Diseases Initiative for Africa, Cochrane South Africa at the South African Medical Research Council and the Centre for Evidence-based Health Care at Stellenbosch University. The broader project includes collaborators from Germany, Ethiopia, Uganda, Rwanda and Malawi.

The CEBHA+ project is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research as part of the Research Networks for Health Innovation in Sub-Saharan Africa Funding Initiative.



***ENDS***

Media are invited to attend the symposium. The full programme is attached. For further information and to RSVP please contact:

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