



NUTRITION CONGRESS

7- 9 OCTOBER 2026

WANDERERS CLUB, JOHANNESBURG

QHAMUKA: A CALL TO SERVE, LEAD & INNOVATE IN NUTRITION

Abstract | Biographies



2026 NUTRITION CONGRESS

30th Congress of the Nutrition Society of South Africa (NSSA)
18th Congress of the Association for Dietetics in South Africa (ADSA)



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— ABSTRACT BIOGRAPHIES —

Listed Alphabetically by
PRESENTER LAST NAME

QUICK SEARCH

—Control (ctrl) – F then type author last name and ENTER—

—BIOGRAPHIES HAVE NOT BEEN EDITED
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PRESENTER:

- Ms. Nikita **Baijnath**
University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Nikita Baijnath is a Food Service Dietitian at Grey's Hospital and a PhD student at University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). Ms Baijnath, Prof Pillay and Dr Wiles' research is on the Health Promotion Levy in South Africa (sugar tax) which explores strategies to improve nutrition policy compliance and promote healthier food environments. Nikita Baijnath holds a BSc, Postgraduate Diploma, and MSc in Dietetics. She currently specialises in food service management and health and safety within the food service industry. Kirthee Pillay is registered dietitian and an Associate Professor in the Discipline of Dietetics and Human Nutrition at the UKZN. Dr Nicola Wiles is a registered dietitian and an Honorary Lecturer in the Discipline of Dietetics and Human Nutrition at UKZN.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Acceptance, availability and accessibility of reformulated sugar-sweetened beverages in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa
 - Understanding, response and support regarding the health promotion levy among urban consumers employed at schools in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa
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PRESENTER:

- Ms. Jandri **Barnard**
University of KwaZulu-Natal (South Africa)

BIOGRAPHY:

- Jandri Barnard has been in private practice in KwaZulu-Natal for over 15 years, after completing her community service year at Newcastle Provincial Hospital. She completed her dietetics degree at the University of Pretoria followed by her Masters in Dietetics degree in 2016 from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, and ongoing studies as a PhD candidate in Dietetics. Presenting her research at national and international congresses, after receiving a research fellowship at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands. She consults paediatric and adult patients in Northern KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga as well as online and given nutritional wellness classes online. She is also a contributing health writer for various publications and received numerous awards for her articles, as well as spokesperson for the Nutrition Society of South Africa.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Health benefits of incorporating indigenous foods into an urbanized diet
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PRESENTER:

- Ms. Marlise **Bester**
University of South Africa (UNISA), South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Marlise Bester is a registered nutritionist and educator currently pursuing a PhD in Nutrition, with a focus on strengthening nutrition education within the school curriculum. She holds a Master's degree in Nutrition and a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), specialising in Natural Sciences. Her research interests centre on child nutrition, particularly the nutritional quality of foods consumed by children and the integration of nutrition education in schools. Marlise has experience in higher education as a lecturer, where she contributes to teaching, curriculum development, and student support across contact and distance learning environments. She is passionate about empowering young learners and advancing knowledge in educational contexts.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Nutrition Education in the South African School Curriculum: A Review of the Literature
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PRESENTER:

- Ms. Ronel **Beukes**
Stellenbosch University, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- I am an experienced lecturer and registered dietitian with 29 years of expertise in community-oriented primary care in nutrition and health professions education. I am skilled in coordinating and supervising clinical training of undergraduate dietetic students in community nutrition settings and currently lecturing across a broad range of subjects in BSc Dietetics at Stellenbosch University. I am actively involved in postgraduate research supervision within master's programs in Public Health Nutrition and Food and Nutrition Security. My areas of interest include nutrition promotion, healthy conversation skills, and community engagement in primary healthcare. I hold a Master in Nutrition and is currently a PhD candidate with a research focus on strategies for workforce upskilling in dietetics and nutritional sciences.

PRESENTATION|S:

- The Drivers and Strategies of Workforce Upskilling in Dietetics and Nutrition Sciences

PRESENTER:

- Ms. Marlize **Botha**
North-West University, South Africa,

BIOGRAPHY:

- Marlizé Botha is a registered dietitian and current PhD candidate at the Centre of Excellence for Nutrition at the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus, South Africa. She obtained both her BSc in Dietetics (2021) and MSc in Dietetics (2024) from the North-West University with distinction. Her research focuses on prebiotic supplementation and gastrointestinal health, and she has a special interest in high-performance athletes. Her expertise lies in the complex interplay between exercise-associated gastrointestinal integrity, gastrointestinal symptoms and systemic inflammation in athletes, with a focus on targeted nutrition interventions to mitigate these effects. She has over three years of experience in clinical nutrition research, including serving as a study coordinator. She currently has one manuscript under review and is preparing two additional manuscripts for publication related to gastrointestinal health in athletes.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Gastrointestinal integrity is associated with systemic inflammation and gut symptoms in South African female university-level team-sport players
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PRESENTER:

- Ms. Janetta Hermiena **Botha**
University of Pretoria, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Janet Botha is a junior lecturer in Consumer Studies education at Aros, a higher education institution in South Africa. She is also pursuing postgraduate research in nutrition, focusing on the reliability and comparative validity of a dietary iron screening tool among undergraduate nutrition students. Her academic interests include nutrition assessment, dietary screening, food studies education, and consumer studies methodology. She is passionate about teaching, student development, and research that contributes to improved nutrition practices.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Reliability and comparative validity of the IRONIC-FFQ adapted for the South African context among nutrition students

PRESENTER:

- Ms. Raffaella **Braga**
University of the Free State, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Raffaella Braga completed her BSc in Dietetics at the University of the Free State from 2017-2020, followed by her community service year at Brits District Hospital. Upon completing her community service, she joined Nutritional Solutions, the largest outpatient-based dietetic practice in South Africa, where she successfully established and led the Pretoria branch. She currently serves as a senior dietitian within the practice, contributing to strategic growth, clinical excellence, and mentorship of junior dietitians.

Her primary clinical interest lies in women's health, with a particular focus on polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS). Driven by her commitment to advancing evidence-based care, she commenced her Master's degree in 2022 at the University of the Free State. Her research, titled "The Knowledge and Practices of Healthcare Providers and the Reported Treatment of Patients with Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome in South Africa," examined both healthcare providers' and patients' perspectives to identify gaps in care and inform improved, patient-centred management strategies.

Raffaella completed her MSc in 2024 and continues to advocate for interdisciplinary collaboration and enhanced standards of care in women's health across South Africa.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Knowledge and Practices of Healthcare Providers in South Africa regarding Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS)
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PRESENTER:

- Ms. Leonie **Burgard**
University Hospital Erlangen (Germany)

BIOGRAPHY:

- Leonie Burgard is a researcher in clinical nutrition and nutritional epidemiology at the Hector-Center for Nutrition, Exercise and Sport, University Hospital Erlangen, Germany. Her research focuses on dietary interventions in obesity and metabolic syndrome, as well as methodological aspects of dietary assessment. She previously worked at the Max Rubner-Institut (Federal Research Institute of Nutrition and Food), where she conducted analyses of national dietary survey data across the life course. Her work combines clinical intervention research with large-scale epidemiological datasets. Leonie Burgard holds a Master's degree in Nutritional Medicine and completed part of her training at Stellenbosch University, South Africa.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Does diet quality drive metabolic response? Changes in Mediterranean diet adherence and metabolic syndrome severity during a lifestyle intervention
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PRESENTER:

- Ms. Taylor **Carnie**
Stellenbosch University, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- I started my academic undergraduate journey at Stellenbosch University in 2021 and I will finish my MSc Food Science degree at the end of 2026. I was fortunate to receive funding from NSFAS to complete my undergraduate degree. Due to my academic merit, I was able to secure the Stellenbosch University funding for my first Masters year in 2025. I approached the FoodBev SETA with my research focus and was successful in securing funding for my final year of MSc this year. My research investigates the effects of drying and maturity stage on various nutritional aspects such as the total phenolic content and antioxidant capacity of 'Keitt' mangoes across different harvest seasons. It also examines drying kinetics, micronanobubble pre-treatments, changes in physicochemical properties, microbial quality, and structural changes using micro-CT imaging. By the completion of my Master's degree, this work will have resulted in at least three peer-reviewed publications and a full thesis and defence, with an abstract recently accepted for presentation at the ISHS Acta Horticulturae Symposium Japan 2026.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Impact of maturity and drying on total phenolic content and antioxidant capacity of 'Keitt' mango over two harvest seasons
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PRESENTER:

- Ms. Angelique **Carson-Porter**
University of the Free State, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Angelique Carson-Porter is a Lecturer in the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics at the University of the Free State, a position she has held since January 2018. She holds a Master's degree in Dietetics from the University of the Free State and is currently pursuing her PhD in the same field. Her professional experience includes serving as a Regional Dietitian for an international company, where she managed large-scale contracts across government and private healthcare facilities, as well as major specialised catering events. She also worked as a Community Dietitian in Thaba Nchu, gaining valuable experience in community-based nutrition and public health. These diverse roles have shaped her commitment to developing dietitians who are not only clinically competent but also equipped with leadership, management, and entrepreneurial skills. She currently teaches Food Service Management and Community Nutrition, with an emphasis on service learning and community engagement projects, to third- and fourth-year Dietetics students, highlighting the strategic and managerial contributions of dietitians within both healthcare and the broader food service industry.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Household dietary diversity and nutritional status of pre-school children in peri-urban and rural Free State, South Africa
 - Nutritional profile of patients with severe dysphagia with feeding tubes at a tertiary hospital in central South Africa
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PRESENTER:

- Ms. Sheena **Chauke**
Grow Great, Johannesburg, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Sheena Dee Chauke is a qualified Dietician and accomplished public health and programme specialist with over 13 years of experience spanning clinical care, community health, institutional nutrition, and NGO programming. Her work is deeply rooted in strengthening health systems and improving nutrition outcomes, with a strong focus on HIV programmes, Nutrition Counselling and Support (NACS), maternal and child health, and the prevention of lifestyle-related diseases. Passionate about empowering communities, she has played a key role in advancing initiatives that address malnutrition and support the critical first 1000 days of life. Beyond her professional practice, Sheena is a dynamic leader and entrepreneur committed to women's empowerment, serving as a driving force behind initiatives such as the BE Woman movement, which inspires women to unlock their potential and build lasting legacies.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Qhamuka for the First 1000 Days: Community Health Worker Leadership and Innovation in Addressing Child Stunting in South Africa
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PRESENTER:

- Ms. Joelaine Meryll **Chetty**
SAMRC Biostatistics/SAFOODS, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Joelaine Chetty is a research dietitian and food composition database compiler at the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC) in PRETORIA, where she works within the Biostatistics Research Unit as part of the South African Food Data System (SAFOODS) team. She has extensive experience in food composition research and has contributed significantly to the development, maintenance, and dissemination of South Africa's national food composition database, a critical resource for nutrition research, dietary assessment, and public health initiatives.

Chetty obtained her BSc in Dietetics from the University of the Western Cape and later completed a Master of Public Health at the University of Cape Town. She's currently completing her PhD Nutritional Sciences at the Stellenbosch University under the leadership of Prof Mbhenyane, who fuels her passion for indigenous foods research.

Her work focuses on compiling and updating nutrient data for foods consumed in South Africa, promoting the responsible use of food composition data, and improving the representation of indigenous and traditional foods in national databases.

Joelaine is a South African Air Force Military spouse and mother of 2 adults.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Updating Recipe Calculations: Advancing the South African Food Composition Database Through Improved Ingredient Data
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PRESENTER:

- Ms. Raisibe **Dimo**
University of Pretoria, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Raisibe Dimo, is a Public Health Practicing Dietitian, registered with Health Profession Council of South Africa (HPCSA) and a member of Association of Dietetics in South Africa (ADSA). She is a Master of Public Health graduate from the University of Pretoria. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Dietetics from Medical University of Southern Africa (MEDUNSA), and she is currently pursuing her PhD in Public Health at the School of Health Systems and Public Health at the University of Pretoria.
Her field of interest and expertise is community nutrition, and she has contributed to the public sector for over 22 years, 16 of which were in the West Rand Health District Services. Her interests are maternal and child nutrition, prevention of nutrition-related non-communicable diseases, and monitoring and evaluation of health programmes. She has a passion for teaching and mentoring others.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Healthcare Users' Knowledge, Attitudes and Dietary Practices of the South African Food-Based Dietary Guidelines in Gauteng Province
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PRESENTER:

- Ms. Helen **Donkin**
Independent, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Helen Donkin has focused her career on the first 1000 days and children's nutrition and health. She is a registered dietitian and holds a Master in Public Health from University of Edinburgh. She has worked in Public Health Nutrition with various NPOs for the last 4 years, implementing nutrition programmes at early learning programmes (ELPs), supporting community-based growth monitoring and promotion, analysis of children's nutritional status and school- and ELP-based menus.
She also works in clinical dietetics, focusing on paediatric clinical medical nutrition therapy, allergies and functional disorders of the gut.

PRESENTATION|S:

- mHealth for community-based growth monitoring and promotion: Three case studies from South African settings

PRESENTER:

- Ms. Janke **Draper**
University of the Free State, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Janke Draper holds a Master's degree in Dietetics from the University of the Free State and is a Certified Lactation Consultant in South Africa. She has been practising as a dietitian since 2013 and completed her community service at Pelonomi Tertiary Hospital.
She is currently employed by the Mpumalanga Department of Health at Standerton Hospital, where her clinical work focuses primarily on paediatric, antenatal, and postnatal care. Her professional interests centre on optimal nutrition during the first 1,000 days of life, with a particular emphasis on maternal and neonatal health.
She is committed to translating evidence-based nutrition principles into accessible, food-based guidance, and to supporting individuals in developing sustainable, long-term lifestyle behaviours and a positive relationship with food.
She is currently a PhD candidate in Dietetics at the University of the Free State. Her research is titled: Development of a Dietetic Education Framework for Pregnant Women Attending Antenatal Care in the Lekwa Municipality.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Nutrition education programmes in pregnant women: results from a scoping review
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PRESENTER:

- Ms. Devishree **Dunna**
University of Johannesburg, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Dunna Devishree is a doctoral fellow at the Food Evaluation Research Centre, School of Tourism, College of Business and Economics, University of Johannesburg. Her research focuses on diabetes management, carbohydrate counting, and the use of digital health tools to support dietary management among adolescents and their caregivers. Her broader research interests include nutrition transition and the role of indigenous foods in promoting healthier dietary patterns and metabolic health.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Rising Diabetes and Nutrition Transition in South Africa: Exploring Millet-Based Solutions through a Multimethod Study
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PRESENTER:

- Ms. Cari **Erasmus**
Heart and Stroke Foundation South Africa, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Cari is a dedicated dietitian with 5 years of diverse experience in private and public healthcare settings. She has a special interest in public health and has a master's degree in public health nutrition with a focus on sustainable protein sources. Her key focus areas include promoting healthy eating habits and nutrition practices through advocating for improved nutrition policy, education, and sustainable food systems.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Harnessing the value of an NPO-led school program to foster healthy eating behaviours in children
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PRESENTER:

- Ms. Abolade **Fabunmi**
University of Ibadan, Nigeria

BIOGRAPHY:

- Abolade Fabunmi is a public health nutritionist, researcher, and health communication specialist with a strong focus on maternal, infant, and young child nutrition in low-resource settings. Her work centres on designing and implementing evidence-based interventions that improve complementary feeding practices, behaviour change, and family support systems to enhance child growth and health outcomes. She has experience conducting nutritional assessments, community outreach programmes, and behaviour change communication initiatives, translating research findings into practical strategies that are culturally appropriate and sustainable. Her research interests include complementary feeding, nutrition education, and the use of digital and community-based platforms to strengthen health promotion and service delivery.
In addition to her public health work, Abolade leads a digital marketing and creative education academy where she trains young professionals in storytelling, media, and strategic communication. She integrates these skills into health advocacy, using digital tools to make nutrition information more accessible and impactful for diverse audiences.
Her interdisciplinary approach bridges science, education, and communication to advance equitable nutrition outcomes across Africa. Abolade remains committed to research-driven solutions that empower families and communities to adopt healthier nutrition practices.

PRESENTATION[S]:

- Assessing selected complementary feeding practices using two behaviour change tools among mothers of infants 6-23 months in Ibadan, Nigeria.
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PRESENTER:

- Dr Tamryn **Frank**
University of the Western Cape, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Dr Tamryn Frank joined the University of the Western Cape's (UWC) School of Public Health in South Africa in 2018, and is a senior lecturer working in the field of promoting healthy food environments. She is a registered dietitian; and holds a PhD in Public Health from UWC and a master's degree in nutrition, human rights and governance from the University of Stellenbosch (in collaboration with Makerere University in Uganda and Oslo University in Norway). She spent 2022 as a visiting scholar at the University of North Carolina's Global Food Research Program in the USA. She has served on the technical task team supporting the South African National Department of Health in developing a nutrient profiling model and front-of-package warning labels for SA. She is also involved in child-directed marketing research, researching ultra-processed food intake, and assessing the effectiveness of the sugary beverage tax in South Africa. Before branching out into academia, Tamryn worked as a primary health care dietitian for eight years for the South African Department of Health, both in the Eastern and Western Cape.

PRESENTATION[S]:

- Ultra-processed research: Mapping the corporate political activity strategies of the food industry in South Africa
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PRESENTER:

- Ms. Debby **Gates**
University of Cape Town, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Debby Gates is a registered Dietitian at the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) and a member of the Association for Dietetics in South Africa (ADSA) executive committee (portfolio: ADSA Learn manager). She obtained her degree, BSc in Dietetics, from the University of Stellenbosch and is currently a PhD candidate in Dietetics at the University of Cape Town. Following her graduation in 1992, she has been practicing as an independent dietitian in the South African Military Health Service. Her extensive 33 years of experience span all areas of dietetics. Debby is also involved in undergraduate lecturing at the University of Cape Town and academic teaching within her institution's multi-disciplinary continuing professional development programme. She is deeply committed to her passion for dietetics and academic teaching.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Postpartum fibre-sugar balance and glycaemic control among South African women with previous gestational diabetes: insights from IINDIAGO randomized controlled trial
 - Two Years of ADSA Learn: Reach, Engagement, and Emerging Trends in Digital Professional Learning in Nutrition and Allied Health
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PRESENTER:

- Ms. Asanda **Getyeza-Ntswam**
University of the Western Cape, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Asanda Getyeza-Ntswam is a food service and public health nutrition expert with 15 years of experience across healthcare systems, academic teaching, and research. She holds a Master of Science in Nutrition Science from the University of the Western Cape, where her thesis critically analyzed the nutritional adequacy of meals served to adult psychiatric inpatients in public hospitals, underscoring her commitment to evidence-based, patient-centered nutrition policy. She is currently pursuing a PhD, exploring how institutional procurement practices affect nutrition quality, sustainability, and equity in public health food environments. Her academic career includes teaching and curriculum development in Food and Consumer Sciences at the University of Zululand. Before academia, Asanda was the Chief Food Service Manager in the Western Cape Department of Health, where she oversaw meal planning, procurement, financial management, and food safety operations for institutions. Her unique path from leading food service operations makes her a credible and innovative voice in institutional nutrition governance. She is dedicated to translating evidence into equitable, culturally responsive nutritional care for vulnerable populations in South Africa.

PRESENTATION|S:

- The Unbroken Chain: Nutritional Adequacy, Cumulative Micronutrient Deficits, and Foodservice Governance in Eastern Cape Psychiatric Hospitals, South Africa
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PRESENTER:

- Mr. Swapnil **Godbharle**
University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Dr. Swapnil Godbharle is a postdoctoral research fellow at the Food Evolution Research Centre, University of Johannesburg. His research focuses on urban dietary transitions, digital dietary assessment, and the relationship between food-away-from-home (FAFH) consumption and non-communicable disease (NCD) risk. He has developed and implemented a mobile-based dietary tracking system, called the “FoodLog” smartphone application, to capture real-time dietary behaviour in free-living populations. His work integrates epidemiology, public health nutrition, and digital health technologies to understand how evolving food environments influence chronic disease risk in rapidly urbanising societies. His research aims to support evidence-based public health strategies that monitor diet using digital tools and inform targeted interventions to address unhealthy dietary behaviours in urban populations undergoing rapid nutrition transitions.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Smartphone-based assessment of FAFH consumption and NCD risk in urban India and South Africa
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PRESENTER:

- Ms. Angelika **Grimbeek**
Heala, Johannesburg, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Angelika Grimbeek is a registered dietitian who has a special interest in child health and public health nutrition and holds a Master’s degree in Community Pediatrics. She is the Policy and Research Manger at the Healthy Living Alliance (HEALA) where she leads the technical resource development and manages the Nourished Truth campaign.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Civil society perspectives on commercial determinants of stunting: A case study of the ‘Not Today Nestlé’ campaign
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PRESENTER:

- Ms. Thandie Bubala **Hamaimbo**
University of Pretoria, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Bubala Thandie Hamaimbo is a Zambian academic and professional with a strong background in food science and nutrition. She is currently a PhD Nutrition student at the University of Pretoria. Bubala worked for TechnoServe Zambia, a not-for-profit organisation where she provided hands-on technical support to over 30 SME agroprocessors in food safety implementation and nutritious food processing with a bias towards indigenous foods and techniques in Zambia and Malawi. She gained practical industry experience that complements her academic expertise. As a junior academic in human nutrition at the University of Zambia, she has contributed to undergraduate curriculum development, teaching and research in nutritious food processing, dietary intake assessment, nutrition promotion and food and nutrition policy analysis. She is part of Zambia's emerging generation of academics. Her dual focus on scientific research and passion for agri-entrepreneurship positions her as a promising figure in shaping sustainable food systems and fostering innovation.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Exploring the role of invasive redclaw crayfish (*Cherax quadricarinatus*) in Zambia's nutrition-sensitive agrifood policies
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PRESENTER:

- Prof Janetta **Harbron**
University of Cape Town, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Janetta Harbron is an Associate Professor in the Health through Physical Activity and Lifestyle (HPALS) research centre at the University of Cape Town. She graduated with a BSc Dietetics, MSc Nutrition Science cum laude and PhD in Physiology degrees, from Stellenbosch University. She has more than 25 years of lecturing experience in undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in dietetics, nutrition and physiology. She has supervised >50 Honours, Masters and PhD students' research projects in nutrition and dietetics to graduation. Janetta currently leads a nutrition research group at UCT with a focus on diet/nutrition and adolescent health, pregnancy, obesity and non-communicable diseases and sports nutrition.

PRESENTATION|S:

- A youth-led participatory action research approach to generate policy ideas for obesity prevention
 - Benchmarking Nutrition Policies in South Africa: Lessons from the CO-CREATE project
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PRESENTER:

- Ms. Vuyani Lisbeth **Hobyani**
Department of Health Government, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- I am a Registered Dietitian graduated from University of Limpopo in 2012 and obtain Master in Public Health Nutrition qualification from the Stellenbosch University in 2025. I have 14years work experience as a Dietitian at different level of health care; Tertiary Hospital (Mankweng Hospital), District Hospitals (Nkhensani Hosptal), Complex Hospital (General De La Rey Hospital), Community Health Care (Giyani CHC), Primary Health Care (Giyani Sub-District clinics, Non Government Organization (ANOVA Health Institute), and at the District (Ekurhuleni Health District) rendering dietetics services on patient care, food services, student training, Integrated Nutrition Programme (INP) strategies and managing dietetics budget. I am currently working as a Chief Dietitian at St Barnabas Hospital in the OR Tambo District of the Eastern Cape Province. My primary duties are to head Dietetics Department and supervising Rehabilitation sections; manage, plan, coordinate, implement, and report on Dietetics services in St Barnabas hospital.

PRESENTATION|S:

- The Role of the Dietitian in the Implementation of a NTP Policy at PHC Settings in Cape Metropole District, SA
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PRESENTER:

- Dr Marizeth **Jordaan**
University of the Free State, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Marizeth Jordaan is a senior lecturer in the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics at the University of the Free State. She holds a PhD in Dietetics from the same institution, with research focused on developing a nutrition screening tool to predict birth outcomes for pregnant women attending a high-risk antenatal clinic.
Marizeth has served as a lecturer at the University of the Free State since 2012, where she combines her expertise in nutrition with a passion for education. Her research interests include maternal and child nutrition, dietary assessment, and the role of nutrition in public health.
She has supervised multiple MSc and PhD candidates and has examined numerous dissertations. She has published in peer-reviewed journals, with research focusing on issues such as anaemia prevalence, dietary diversity, obesity-related health risks, and maternal and child nutrition. Her work has appeared in journals like the South African Journal of Clinical Nutrition, BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth, and Child: Care, Health and Development, contributing valuable insights to the field of dietetics. Additionally, she has presented her research at national and international conferences, including the European Society for Clinical Nutrition and Metabolism (ESPEN) Congress and the International Congress of Dietetics.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Socio-Demographic Factors Associated with Infant Feeding Practices of Mothers or Caregivers in Mangaung, Free State
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PRESENTER:

- Dr Malory Rowena **Jumat**
South African Medical Research Council, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Malory Jumat is a Chief Research Technologist at the South African Medical Research Council, working as a Food Composition Database Compiler within the Biostatistics Research Unit in the South African Food Data System (SAFOODS) division. She holds a BSc in Food Science and Nutrition, an Honours degree in Food Science and Nutrition, and an MSc in Nutrition from the University of Pretoria. She has recently completed her PhD in Nutrition through the University of Pretoria.
She is responsible for client support and administrative functions of the FoodFinder software and is involved in the updating, quality assurance, and innovation of the South African Food Composition Tables and Food Quantities Manual. Her current research interests include the development of databases containing non-nutritive dietary compounds. She is the Chair of the Cape Branch of the NSSA and a professional member of SAAFOST.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Advancing South Africa's Nutritional Data Infrastructure: Development and Validation of the First South African Dietary Polyphenol Reference Database
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PRESENTER:

- Ms. Alice **Khan**
University of the Western Cape, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Alice Scaria Khan is a researcher in the School of Public Health at the University of the Western Cape and a Vital Strategies PhD fellow. Her research interests include nutrition and the food environment, particularly food and beverage marketing of packaged and fast foods via various media, availability and access to healthy and unhealthy food and drinks in the school food environment and policies to improve food environments in general.

PRESENTATION|S:

- South African adolescents' perceptions of healthy and unhealthy foods and determinants of their food choices within the school food environment
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PRESENTER:

- Ms. Leanne **Kiezer**
Danone Southern Africa, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Leanne Kiezer (RD SA)
BSc Diet UKZN
Pg Dip Diet UKZN
MSc Nutrition NWU
Leanne Kiezer is a Registered Dietitian and the Head of Public Affairs, Nutrition, and Regulatory Affairs for Danone Sub-Saharan Africa with direct business operations in South Africa, Nigeria and Ghana. She leads strategic initiatives at the intersection of science, regulation, public health, and sustainability across the region. With deep expertise in nutrition and regulatory affairs, Leanne drives policy advocacy, stakeholder engagement, and external positioning to promote sustainable health outcomes. She also establishes and monitors the company's health strategy, supporting Danone to fulfil its mission to deliver health through food to as many people as possible, while advancing its sustainability goals.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Exploring the voluntary commitments and practices of Danone in supporting healthier food environments and improving population nutrition in South Africa

PRESENTER:

— Dr Simoné **King**

Centre of Excellence for Nutrition (CEN), North-West University (NWU), South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

— Simone King is a registered dietitian with a PhD in Dietetics, specialising in immunonutrition and host-directed therapies in tuberculosis (TB). Her doctoral research investigated the clinical and molecular effects of adjunctive immune-modulating nutrients, with a particular focus on omega-3 long-chain polyunsaturated fatty acids (n-3 LCPUFA).

Her work includes a systematic review and meta-analysis of randomised controlled trials evaluating immunonutrition in pulmonary TB, as well as preclinical and in silico studies exploring immune, inflammatory, and hepatic responses. She also contributed to the development of a Phase II randomised controlled trial protocol assessing the effects of adjunctive n-3 LCPUFA on early bactericidal activity, inflammation, and safety in TB patients.

Simoné has strong expertise in evidence synthesis, data analysis, and scientific writing, and is passionate about translating mechanistic and clinical research into practical, evidence-based strategies to improve TB treatment outcomes and patient quality of life.

PRESENTATION|S:

— The effects of immune-modulatory nutrients in pulmonary tuberculosis patients: a systematic review and meta-analysis

PRESENTER:

— Dr Nelene **Koen**

Stellenbosch University, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

— Dr Nelene Koen is a registered dietitian and senior lecturer in the Division of Human Nutrition, Department of Global Health, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Stellenbosch University. She coordinates and teaches various undergraduate and postgraduate modules, provide post-graduate study supervision to Master of Therapeutic Nutrition, Public Health Nutrition and Food and Nutrition Security as well as doctoral students and is actively involved in research related to food and nutrition labelling in South Africa, the South African sodium regulations and health promotion levy. She has presented her research at various national and international congresses and has published in several accredited peer-reviewed journals.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Nutrition labelling on a selection of ultra-processed foods in South Africa
 - Online grocery shopping and nutrition labelling in South Africa: An analysis of digital platforms
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PRESENTER:

- Ms. Leonore **Kotze**
North-West University, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- I am currently a registered dietitian, also enrolled in the South African Certified Lactation Consultant course, aiming to finish the course in March 2026. I am fascinated by how nutrition can impact the development of a child from the moment of conception. I believe that thorough history-taking and understanding each mother or child's situation helps to form nutrition goals that can overcome barriers and ensure sustainable interventions. I enjoy working together with people from different backgrounds, including other healthcare professionals, to reach mothers and children from all spheres of society. I hope to utilize my practical knowledge and experience in breastfeeding, combined with my academic knowledge in dietetics, to educate people and have a lasting, positive impact on their quality of life. In 2026, I will be start working as a lactation consultant and paediatric dietitian in the private sector as part of Arné Naudé's practice (dietitian and lactation consultant). I am also enrolled in Master of Science in Nutrition with Public Health Nutrition at Northwest University.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Scenario-based costing analysis of exclusive breastfeeding for South African mothers: A Protocol
-

PRESENTER:

- Ms. Zandile **Kubeka**
National Department of Health, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Ms Zandile Kubeka is a Deputy Director: Dietetics in the Cluster Child and Youth Health (NDOH). She has 21 years' experience working as a Dietitian in the public sector, 17 years in the National Department of health to date, working in the area of infant and young child nutrition. She has to date been responsible for policy development, guideline development, coordination, monitoring and support to activities around Child nutrition within the broader context of Maternal, Neonatal, Child Health and PMTCT. Ms Kubeka serves in various committees at local, regionally and international level including the National Food and Nutrition security steering committee, SADAC Food and nutrition steering committees and represents South Africa Internationally in the Joint FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Committee for Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses, where she is actively involved in various technical working groups. Ms Kubeka holds a BSc in Dietetics, a Postgraduate Diploma in Dietetics (University of KwaZulu Natal) and a Master's Degree in Public Health (Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University).

PRESENTATION|S:

- The revised 2026 Integrated Prevention and Management of Malnutrition (IPMM) guideline
-

PRESENTER:

- Ms. Chere **Le Hanie**
North-West University, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Ms Chere le Hanie is a PhD student at the North West University. Ms Chere le Hanie holds a BSc in Dietetics and MSc in Nutrition with Nuclear Techniques from the North West University.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Omega-3 long-chain polyunsaturated fatty acid supplementation increase pro-resolving plasma lipid mediators in South African women living with overweight or obesity
-

PRESENTER:

- Ms. Zeldah **Luvha**
North-West University, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Zeldah Luvha is a PhD student in Nutrition at North-West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa, and a registered member of the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA). She holds a Master's degree in Nutrition with Public Health Nutrition and has a strong interest in public health nutrition and the promotion of healthy dietary behaviours.
Her research focuses on assessing adherence to the South African Food-Based Dietary Guidelines (SAFBDGs) among young adults aged 20–30 years. Through her work, she aims to generate evidence that can inform nutrition policy and guide targeted interventions to improve dietary practices and reduce the risk of non-communicable diseases among young adults.
Zeldah has experience with several nutritional assessment techniques, including 24-hour dietary recalls and Food Frequency Questionnaires (FFQ), which are widely used in dietary intake research. She has also developed skills in analysing dietary intake data and interpreting findings within a public health context.
She is passionate about translating research findings into practical strategies that support healthier food choices and improved nutrition outcomes. Zeldah is committed to contributing to evidence-based nutrition strategies aimed at improving the health and well-being of young adults in South Africa.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Adherence to the South African Food-Based Dietary Guidelines among young adults aged 20-30 years: The African-PREDICT study

PRESENTER:

- Ms. Barbara **Luyt**
Stellenbosch University, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Barbara Luyt is an HPCSA-registered dietitian who completed her BSc in Dietetics at Stellenbosch University in 2019, where she received the Outstanding BSc Dietetics Student of the Year award. She completed her community service at Tygerberg Hospital, gaining valuable experience in clinical nutrition within a tertiary hospital setting.
She recently completed her MSc in Public Health Nutrition at Stellenbosch University (2025). Her research, titled Accuracy Estimation of Digital Photographs for Length Measurements in Infants and Young Children, explores innovative methods to improve anthropometric measurement and support earlier identification of childhood malnutrition, particularly stunting.
Barbara currently works as a Registered Dietitian at Vanessa McEwan Dietitians Inc., primarily consulting at Louis Leipoldt Mediclinic, where she provides medical nutrition therapy to hospitalised patients. She has a strong interest in addressing childhood malnutrition and advancing the use of technology to support real-time nutrition monitoring systems in South Africa.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Accuracy estimation of digital photographs for length measurements in infants and young children
-

PRESENTER:

- Dr Prudence Bongekile **Mabaso**
University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Dr. Mabaso is a registered Nutritionist and interdisciplinary scholar whose work bridges health sciences and management studies. She holds an MSc in Human Nutrition (University of Kwa-Zulu Natal) and a PhD in Business Science (University of Cape Town), with research advancing gender, health, and work equity through decolonial and participatory approaches that centre marginalised experiences. Her current work explores workplace breastfeeding support, work-family dynamics, and Ubuntu-informed methodologies. She co-chairs the Gender and Health at Work network and brings over five years' experience in nutrition practice.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Breastfeeding as a foundation for infant food security: Strengthening first food systems and addressing food inequalities
 - Bridging the language gap in nutrition care: Development of bilingual isiZulu–English resources for dietetics and human nutrition education
 - Trends in migration patterns of South African dietetics and human nutrition graduates: A retrospective study (2001–2024)
-

PRESENTER:

- Ms. Nokuthula **Mabena**
Rahima Moosa Mother and Child Hospital, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Nokuthula “Thuli” Mabena is a registered dietitian at Rahima Moosa Mother and Child Hospital and a PhD candidate at the University of the Witwatersrand. With an MSc in Dietetics and a background in food service management, she combines clinical nutrition, research, and health systems practice to improve patient care. Her doctoral research focuses on maternal stressors and human milk production among very low birth weight infants in neonatal care. Thuli's dedication to maternal-infant nutrition drives her to support vulnerable communities.
Her diverse academic and personal talents coexist with several areas for improvement. Finding a good balance between work and home life is essential for maintaining productivity, personal well-being, and sustained professional growth.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Human milk feeding and kangaroo mother care in very low birth weight infants: Evidence from a Johannesburg neonatal unit

PRESENTER:

- Ms. Rodrey **Mafodi**
University of Pretoria, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Rodrey Mafodi is a PhD candidate at the University of Pretoria and is affiliated with the Research Centre for Maternal, Fetal, Newborn and Child Health Care Strategies. Her research focuses on improving maternal, newborn, and child health outcomes through evidence-based health care strategies. She has a strong interest in strengthening health systems, improving quality of care, and promoting equitable access to essential maternal and child health services.
During her master's degree programme, Rodrey contributed to the Siyakhula Project and the InnoFood Project, where she participated in research exploring the food consumption patterns of women and their young children. These projects aimed to better understand maternal and child nutrition and identify opportunities to improve nutritional practices and health outcomes.
Rodrey also worked as an Administrative Research Assistant on the Siyakubona Project. In this role, she contributed to research assessing the benefits, feasibility, scalability, and acceptability of point-of-care ultrasound (POCUS) using both quantitative and qualitative data.
Through her doctoral research, Rodrey seeks to identify nutrition-related determinants of maternal and child morbidity and examine their consequences for maternal and child health, with the aim of generating evidence to inform strategies and interventions to improve maternal and child health outcomes.

PRESENTATION[S]:

- Comparison between two pregnancy-related dietary scores among pregnant women attending Antenatal Care in Atteridgeville, Tshwane
-

PRESENTER:

- Dr Tjale Cloupas **Mahopo**
University of Venda, South Africa,

BIOGRAPHY:

- Dr. Tjale Cloupas Mahopo is a lecturer and Postgraduate Coordinator in the Department of Nutrition at the University of Venda, South Africa. He holds a PhD in Sustainable Agriculture and is a registered nutritionist with the Health Professions Council of South Africa. His research focuses on maternal and child nutrition, infant feeding practices, gut health, and antimicrobial resistance. He is actively involved in longitudinal birth cohort studies examining the relationships between diet, environmental exposures (WASH), intestinal microbiota, and child growth in rural communities. His work aims to generate evidence on early-life determinants of malnutrition and antibiotic resistance to inform public health interventions. Dr. Mahopo has contributed to international collaborative research and published in peer-reviewed journals. He is also dedicated to postgraduate supervision and mentoring, supporting the development of emerging researchers while advancing nutrition science in resource-limited settings.

PRESENTATION[S]:

- Early infant feeding practices, intestinal permeability and risk of stunting at two years in a South African birth cohort
-

PRESENTER:

- Ms. Tshepo **Makete**
Botswana Defence Force, Botswana

BIOGRAPHY:

- Ms Tshepo Makete is a Chief Nutritionist with the Botswana Defence Force and a highly experienced clinical dietitian with over 18 years of experience in clinical nutrition. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Dietetics and Nutrition from the University of the Western Cape, Cape Town, as well as an International Olympic Committee Postgraduate Diploma in Sports Nutrition. She recently completed her Master's degree in Dietetics at North-West University, Centre of Excellence for Nutrition.
Ms Makete has extensive experience in hospital-based nutrition care, with particular interest in pediatric and critical care nutrition that focuses on strengthening evidence-based nutrition interventions to improve clinical outcomes and advance nutrition practice in resource-constrained healthcare settings.
In the military setting, Ms Makete currently provides expert guidance on the planning, development and evaluation of feeding systems designed to enhance combat readiness, physical endurance and the overall health of military personnel. As a subject matter expert, she also contributes to policy development and the implementation of nutrition programmes that support operational effectiveness and performance within the armed forces.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Anthropometric status and feeding practices of HIV exposed and unexposed preterm infants admitted to the largest regional hospital in Botswana
-

PRESENTER:

- Ms. Mafanato Gladys **Maluleka**
University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Mafanato Gladys Maluleka is a Research Assistant at Ezintsha, a division of the University of the Witwatersrand. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Nutrition from the University of Venda, as well as a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (Senior and FET Phase) obtained from the University of South Africa. She is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Nutrition at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.
Mafanato has experience in both qualitative and quantitative research methods, with a strong interest in mixed-methods approaches. Her research focus spans across child nutrition, education, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children, adolescents, adults, and families in South Africa, as well as studies related to HIV/AIDS. Her academic and research work reflects a commitment to improving health outcomes and contributing to evidence-based interventions that address social and public health challenges.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Three decades of the South African National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP): A scoping review of evidence
-

PRESENTER:

- Ms. Glenrose **Manale**
University of Limpopo, Polokwane, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Ms. Glenrose Manale is a registered dietitian with over 18 years of professional experience encompassing clinical practice, teaching in higher education, and sales in pharmaceutical industry. She holds a Master of Dietetics degree from the University of Limpopo and is currently appointed as a Lecturer in the Department of Human Nutrition and Dietetics at the same institution.
In her academic role, she contributes to the design, facilitation, and evaluation of teaching and learning activities; the development of evidence instructional materials; and the ongoing refinement of curricula through systematic curriculum design and review processes. She also supervises research projects and supports capacity-building initiatives aimed at strengthening the competencies of healthcare professionals.
Her research and scholarly activities are situated within the field of clinical nutrition, with a particular emphasis on renal nutrition. Her work is further distinguished by a sustained commitment to reducing the translational gap between evidence-based nutritional guidelines and their systematic integration into routine clinical practice. She advances this objective by promoting high standards of clinical care, strengthening the competencies of healthcare professionals, and improving patient outcomes through coordinated initiatives in education, research, and mentorship.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Adherence to renal dietary guidelines among chronic kidney disease patients on hemodialysis at a tertiary hospital, Limpopo Province, South Africa
-

PRESENTER:

- Dr Tshifhiwa Cynthia **Mandiwana**
University of Venda, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Not Available

PRESENTATION|S:

- Growth Monitoring and Promotion Programme: Mothers Experience and Perceived Barriers in Vhembe District, South Africa

PRESENTER:

- Ms. Bonolo **Mangoenyane**
North-West University, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Bonolo Mangoenyane is a MSc student at the Centre of Excellence for Nutrition at North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus). She obtained her Bachelor of Science in Nutrition degree from the University of Venda, where she developed a strong foundation in human nutrition and public health. She has two years of experience as a research assistant through her internship with the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), where she was involved in research activities including data collection, dietary assessment, and community-based nutrition studies.

Her academic and research interests are centered on dietary intake and nutrition in early childhood, particularly within resource-constrained settings. She is passionate about improving the nutritional status and health outcomes of children aged 2–5 years, with a focus on evidence-based interventions and policy-relevant research. Her current postgraduate research explores nutrient adequacy of menus provided in early childhood development centres in South Africa.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Evaluating the nutrient adequacy of menus provided to children in ECD centres in JB Marks municipality
-

PRESENTER:

- Ms. Faith **Masala**
National Department of Health, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Ms Itani Faith Masala is a registered dietitian and nutrition expert based in South Africa, known for her long-standing contributions to clinical nutrition practice, community health, and public sector nutrition initiatives. She has close to two decades of experience in dietetics and nutrition, working across clinical settings and national health programmes. She holds a Master of Science in Public Nutrition and served as a dietician in various facilities including Elim Hospital (Limpopo),
Public Health and Policy Engagement:
Beyond hospital practice, Faith Masala has held roles within the Nutrition Directorate of the National Department of Health in South Africa, where she contributes to policy-oriented work and national nutrition strategies. Her involvement at the Department highlights her transition from clinical practice to broader public health nutrition leadership.
Areas of expertise:
Medical Nutrition Therapy - including diet management for chronic conditions such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease and malnutrition.
Public Sector Nutrition - contributing to national nutrition policy, food-based dietary guideline implementation, and health promotion.
Community Nutrition Education - advocating for sustainable and culturally appropriate healthy eating through workshops and professional forums.
Her work illustrates evolving role of dietitians in South Africa's health system, especially in addressing public health challenges through evidence-based nutrition leadership.

PRESENTATION[S]:

- Bridging the Gap: Health Professionals' Knowledge of Dietary Guidelines (SAFBDG) and Food Fortification in Limpopo, South Africa
 - Burden of Obesity and Cardiometabolic Risk Among Health Professionals in South African Public Healthcare Facilities
-

PRESENTER:

- Dr Lethiwe Lynett **Mbuyane**
University of South Africa, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Dr Lethiwe Lynett Mbuyane is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Life and Consumer Sciences at the University of South Africa (UNISA), where she specialises in food microbiology, yeast fermentation, and food safety. Her research focuses on bioprospecting indigenous microorganisms and exploring the probiotic potential of yeasts found in traditional African foods, contributing to fields like oenology and lipid metabolism. At UNISA, she manages modules ranging from Food Hygiene and Safety Practices to Beverage Studies. Beyond her research, Dr Mbuyane is actively involved in community development, having served as a Teaching Professional for the Daveyton Community Engagement Project aimed at poverty alleviation. Her career is defined by a commitment to both scientific advancement and practical community empowerment.

PRESENTATION[S]:

- Exploring fingerprinting techniques to survey the quality spontaneously fermented southern African traditional products
-

PRESENTER:

- Dr Lethiwe Lynett **Mbuyane**
University of South Africa, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Dr Lethiwe Lynett Mbuyane is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Life and Consumer Sciences at the University of South Africa (UNISA), where she specialises in food microbiology, yeast fermentation, and food safety. Her research focuses on bioprospecting indigenous microorganisms and exploring the probiotic potential of yeasts found in traditional African foods, contributing to fields like oenology and lipid metabolism. At UNISA, she manages modules ranging from Food Hygiene and Safety Practices to Beverage Studies. Beyond her research, Dr Mbuyane is actively involved in community development, having served as a Teaching Professional for the Daveyton Community Engagement Project aimed at poverty alleviation. Her career is defined by a commitment to both scientific advancement and practical community empowerment.

PRESENTATION|S:

- The impact of honey on the quality of amasi and mahewu during storage
-

PRESENTER:

- Ms. Busisiwe **Mkhabela**
North-West University, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Busisiwe Mkhabela is a registered Community and Public Health Nutritionist currently pursuing a Master of Science in Nutrition with Public Health Nutrition at North-West University, with training focused on population-level nutrition interventions and health promotion. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Nutrition from the University of Venda and a prior Bachelor of Science in Nutrition from the University of Pretoria. Her academic excellence has been recognised with multiple awards, including best overall graduate and best student in the school of Health Sciences.
Her professional experience spans community, clinical, and academic settings. As a Community Nutritionist intern, she provided maternal and child nutrition care, conducted dietary assessments, and led health education programmes. She has also gained experience in food service management and participated in community-based nutrition initiatives with organisations such as Save the Children South Africa.
Busisiwe's research interests centre on addressing micronutrient deficiencies and improving nutrition outcomes among vulnerable populations, reflected in her co-authored peer-reviewed publication in *Nutrients* (2025). She has further contributed to student development through academic writing consultation and mentorship at the North-West University. Her work is driven by a strong commitment to evidence-based nutrition, community engagement, and public health improvement.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Association of body composition and fat distribution with iron status in young South African women
-

PRESENTER:

- Dr Blessing Nkazimulo **Mkhwanazi**
University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Dr Mkhwanazi is a Physiology Lecturer in the discipline of Dietetics and Human Nutrition at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg campus. My research interests are in factors that contribute towards the development of obesity and diabetes mellitus. These include Food Addiction (FA) and Disordered Eating (DE). My focus area is also on the development and evaluation of alternative treatments for the management of diabetes mellitus and obesity. These are achieved through the synthesis and characterisation of derivatives and plant-derived solid nanoparticles.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Obesity, food addiction, disordered eating, and mental health: Prevalence and associations among university students in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa
-

PRESENTER:

- Ms. Thando **Mlambo**
University of South Africa, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- At the University of South Africa, Thando Mlambo serves as an adjunct lecturer in the Department of Consumer Science. She has a Master's degree in Consumer Science, which she earned by researching the digital food environment and its impact on the food relationships of young adults. Her dissertation, investigated the ways in which young adults' perceptions of food, decision-making, and nutrition are influenced by their access to online food information. Additionally, she received her undergraduate degree in Consumer Science with honours.
Thando's academic interests are situated at the intersection of consumer behaviour, digital food environments, nutrition information access, and the changing relationship between consumers and food in the digital era. Her research aims to contribute to the ongoing dialogue regarding the impact of digital platforms on the knowledge, access, and potential confusion surrounding nutrition among young adults. She honed her communication, research, and audience engagement skills during her five-year tenure in marketing, brand management, and campaign coordination, which preceded her academic career. Thando is dedicated to the advancement of consumer-focused approaches to food, nutrition communication, and digital food environments through her research and instructing.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Exploring the association between the digital food environment and consumers' relationship with food in young adult South Africans

PRESENTER:

- Ms. Thandeka **Mlungwana**
University of Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Thandeka Mlungwana is a registered dietitian currently serving at Manguzi District Hospital within the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health, where she applies her expertise to improve nutritional outcomes and support public health initiatives. She plays an active role in delivering evidence-based dietary interventions to the local community, with a strong focus on patient-centred care and population health. She graduated with a Master of Science in Dietetics in May 2026. Her academic journey reflects a commitment to advancing dietetics through rigorous research, with a particular interest in child nutrition and nutrition policy. She is passionate about addressing the nutritional challenges faced by vulnerable populations in South Africa and contributing to sustainable, evidence-based solutions. Her research explores the potential of traditional and indigenous plant foods in improving dietary quality and supporting child health outcomes. Although her work is currently in progress toward publication, it contributes to the growing body of evidence informing public health strategies and clinical practice. Through her combined roles as a practicing dietitian and emerging researcher, Thandeka aims to strengthen nutrition interventions and promote improved dietary practices for children and communities.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Leveraging Indigenous and Traditional Crops for Complementary Food Fortification: Insights from Healthcare Workers in Rural Manguzi, KwaZulu-Natal
-

PRESENTER:

- Ms. Tshegofatso **Mogase**
Sefako Makgatho Health Science University, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Tshegofatso Mogase is a principal technical officer and honours coordinator in the Department of Human Physiology at Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University, South Africa. She has recently submitted her PhD in health sciences for examination through a cotutelle programme between Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University and the University of Stirling, Scotland. Her doctoral research investigates the use of bioelectrical impedance vector analysis in the assessment of refeeding syndrome among children with severe acute malnutrition. Her academic and research interests include child nutrition, severe acute malnutrition, refeeding syndrome, clinical assessment, and public health nutrition. She is involved in undergraduate and postgraduate teaching, student supervision, and research capacity development in health sciences. Tshegofatso has presented her work at national scientific meetings and has published a systematic review and meta-analysis on "The identification and management of refeeding syndrome in inpatient severely acutely malnourished children aged 6 to 59 months in sub-Saharan African countries: a systematic review and meta-analysis" and is currently preparing manuscripts from her doctoral research for publication. Her work is driven by a commitment to improving the early identification and management of nutrition-related complications in vulnerable paediatric populations, particularly in resource-constrained settings.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Barriers to the early identification of refeeding syndrome in hospitalised children with severe acute malnutrition: Perspectives of healthcare practitioners
-

PRESENTER:

- Mr. Kegotshepile Gerald **Mokubela**
University of Limpopo, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Mr Kegotshepile Gerald Mokubela is an MSc Dietetics candidate and part-time Junior Lecturer in the Department of Human Nutrition and Dietetics at the University of Limpopo, South Africa. His academic and research interests lie in public health nutrition, early childhood nutrition, and the implementation of nutrition policies and programmes in low-resource community settings.
His current research focuses on the perceptions and experiences of Early Childhood Development Centre practitioners regarding menu implementation in Polokwane Municipality, with particular emphasis on practical strategies used to overcome resource, financial, and infrastructural constraints. This work aims to generate context-specific evidence to inform sustainable nutrition interventions and strengthen child nutrition outcomes.
Mr Mokubela is actively involved in undergraduate teaching, curriculum development, and community engagement initiatives aligned with national nutrition priorities. He has participated in nutrition education campaigns, student research supervision support, and multidisciplinary community projects. His professional interests include translating nutrition research into practice, capacity building for frontline nutrition practitioners, and strengthening food and nutrition security at the community level.
Through his research and teaching, he is committed to advancing evidence-based nutrition practice and contributing to innovative, equitable, and sustainable nutrition solutions in South Africa.

PRESENTATION[S]:

- Perceptions and Experiences of Practitioners regarding menu implementation in Early Childhood Development Care Centers in the Polokwane Municipality, Limpopo Province
-

PRESENTER:

- Ms. Tumelo **Molefe**
University of South Africa, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Tumelo Molefe is a researcher and academic in Consumer Science, currently pursuing a master's degree at the University of South Africa (UNISA). Her research focuses on caregiver use of added sugar in home-prepared and commercial infant cereals in KwaZulu -Natal, South Africa, contributing to infant nutrition and public health discourse.
She holds a Bachelor of Consumer Science and an Honours degree from UNISA, reflecting a strong commitment to her field. Before returning to academia, Tumelo completed a Diploma in Hospitality Management and gained industry experience between 2013 and 2015. A foundation that continues to inform her understanding of food systems and consumer behaviour.
Through her research, Tumelo aims to contribute to evidence-based interventions that promote healthy feeding practices and improved nutritional outcomes for infants in South Africa.

PRESENTATION[S]:

- Caregiver use of added sugar in home-prepared and commercial infant cereals in a district of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa
-

PRESENTER:

- Dr Selekane Ananias **Motadi**
University of Venda, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Dr. Selekane Ananias Motadi is a dedicated nutrition scholar and lecturer in the Department of Nutrition at the University of Venda. He began his academic journey at the same institution, earning a Bachelor of Science in Nutrition in 2008. Driven by a passion for improving public health, he completed a Master's degree in Public Nutrition in 2013, laying a strong foundation for his research career. Committed to excellence in teaching and professional development, Dr. Motadi obtained a Postgraduate Certificate in Health Professions Education from the University of Cape Town. In 2024, he reached a significant milestone by earning a PhD in Nutritional Science from Stellenbosch University. He is a registered Nutritionist with the Health Professions Council of South Africa and has authored 23 articles published in DHET-accredited journals. His research primarily focuses on micronutrient malnutrition, with particular emphasis on iron, zinc, vitamin B12, calcium and magnesium deficiencies, contributing valuable evidence toward improving nutritional outcomes in vulnerable populations.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Vitamin B12 Status and Dietary Intake of Patients with Type 2 Diabetes Receiving Metformin in Thulamela Municipality
-

PRESENTER:

- Dr Jane **Muchiri**
University of Pretoria, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Dr Jane Muchiri ; PhD dietetics (Pret), Msc. Nutrition & Dietetics (Flinders, Australia); Bsc. Agriculture & Home-Economics (Egerton, Kenya); Dip Agriculture & Home-economics (Egerton). Post Doc (Pret). I am currently an extra ordinary lecturer at the Department of Human Nutrition, University of Pretoria. I'm a researcher and have been in academics most of my working life where I have been involved in teaching nutrition/dietetics courses to undergraduate students and supervising postgraduate students. My passion is to positively impact the community in nutrition related matters through training & mentoring young people and doing research that can help solve nutritional problems. My research interests include non-communicable disease prevention and management particularly diabetes and child and maternal health

PRESENTATION|S:

- Food intake and anthropometric nutritional status of children with autism spectrum disorders in Durban, South Africa

PRESENTER:

- Dr Carmen **Muller**
University of Pretoria, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Dr. Carmen Muller is a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Pretoria working in the fields of nutrition, food security, and agriculture, with a focus on sustainable food production. Her research focuses on understanding the nutritional value of foods and identifying approaches to strengthen food systems and improve access to nutritious diets.
She has experience in food composition analysis and nutritional assessment. Her work has examined a wide range of food commodities, including plant-based foods, animal-source foods, and emerging alternative protein sources. She also works extensively with food regulations, policies, and nutrition programmes, contributing scientific evidence to support informed decision-making in the food and nutrition sector.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Consumer investigation of peanuts in South Africa's formal and informal markets
-

PRESENTER:

- Prof Lindelani Fhumudzani **Mushaphi**
University of Venda, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Prof Lindelani Fhumudzani Mushaphi has a PhD in human nutrition from the University of the Free State. She has been the deputy dean of teaching and learning at the Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Venda, since 2022. Prof. Mushaphi is a registered dietitian with HPCSA. She is a member of the Nutrition Society in South Africa.
Her research interests include maternal and child nutrition, micronutrients, food security, non-communicable diseases, and indigenous food systems. She has supervised master's students and three doctoral students to completion. She co-authored articles and presented papers at national and international nutrition conferences.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Menu Availability, Nutrient Composition, and Dietary Diversity in the Registered Early Childhood Centres in rural areas of Limpopo Province
-

PRESENTER:

- Ms. Shakun **Naicker**
Durban University of Technology, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- I am a PhD candidate whose research focuses on food labelling, consumer protection, and regulatory compliance, examining how labelling systems influence food safety culture, risk communication, and informed decision-making. my work integrates scientific, behavioural, and policy perspectives to strengthen regulatory frameworks and improve transparency across the food value chain.
I bring extensive experience in food safety management and scientific and regulatory affairs, developed through leadership roles in FMCG and manufacturing environments. My career has centred on translating complex regulatory and scientific requirements into practical, audit-ready systems that elevate organisational performance. I am recognised for the ability to bridge theory and practice and develops accessible training and learning materials that empower diverse teams, strengthen food safety culture, and embed operational excellence. My combined academic and professional expertise positions her at the forefront of efforts to advance food labelling governance and integrate science, policy, and industry practice.

PRESENTATION|S:

- A Delphi-Based validation of consumer food labelling lessons for South African consumers
-

PRESENTER:

- Prof Ashika **Naicker**
Durban University of Technology, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Prof Ashika Naicker is an Associate Professor and HOD for the Department of Food and Nutrition at the Durban University of Technology. His research interests focus on a healthy food environment.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Regulation and monitoring of the sale of foods and beverages at school tuckshops: A pilot study

PRESENTER:

- Ms. Nokukhanya **Ncamane**
University of Johannesburg, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Nokukhanya Ncamane is a recent Master's graduate from the School of Tourism and Hospitality at the University of Johannesburg and a member of the Food Evolution Research Centre (FERC). Her research interests include nutrition knowledge, dietary behaviour and the factors influencing fast-food consumption in urban communities. Her Master's research examined the relationship between nutrition knowledge and fast-food consumption patterns among adults in Johannesburg, contributing to understanding the knowledge-behaviour gap in dietary practices. Her work focuses on how socio-economic and environmental factors influence food choices and public health outcomes. Nokukhanya is also passionate about digitalisation in education and research, with a particular interest in the use of virtual reality (VR) and emerging technologies to enhance learning experiences and support innovative approaches to knowledge sharing and community engagement. She is committed to contributing to research and initiatives that promote healthier dietary behaviours and improved nutrition awareness.

PRESENTATION|S:

- The Nutrition Knowledge-Behaviour Gap: Fast-Food Consumption Among Adults in Johannesburg
-

PRESENTER:

- Dr Sanja **Nel**
University of Pretoria, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Sanja Nel is a Registered Dietitian and South African Certified Lactation Consultant. She obtained her PhD Dietetics in 2024. She is currently working as a researcher at the University of Pretoria's Research Centre for Maternal, Fetal, Infant and Child Health Care Strategies. Her research focuses on nutrition in the first thousand days of life, with a particular interest in foetal and infant growth.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Exploring the utility of calf circumference as an anthropometric indicator of nutrition status in pregnancy
- Fenton 2013 and 2025 growth charts in South Africa: real-world differences and their practical implications

PRESENTER:

- Prof Cebisa Noxolo **Nesamvuni**
University of Venda, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Dr Cebisa Noxolo Nesamvuni is an Associate Professor in the Department of Nutrition at the Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Venda. She holds a PhD and a master's degree in Nutrition, as well as a master's degree in Health Professions Education. Her research focuses on maternal and child nutrition, food composition, indigenous foods, and sustainable strategies to improve dietary quality in low-resource communities. Her current work investigates the nutritional and microbial properties of fortified staple foods using nutrient-dense ingredients such as Moringa oleifera and edible insects, such as termites, and the development and caregiver acceptability of plant-based ready-to-use therapeutic foods formulated from soybean, Bambara groundnut, and M. oleifera. Her work advances innovative, culturally relevant food-based solutions to nutrition challenges in Africa.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Biochemical and microbial quality of instant maize porridge fortified with Moringa oleifera leaves and termite powders
 - Nutritional Quality and Caregiver Acceptability of a Peanut- and Milk-Free Plant-Based Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food
-

PRESENTER:

- Ms. Siyanda **Ngcelwana**
Nelson Mandela University, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Siyanda Ngcelwana is a dedicated dietitian with a strong passion for improving health outcomes through evidence-based nutrition and compassionate care. Her professional work focuses particularly on clinical nutrition, where she supports patients in achieving better health through practical, individualized dietary interventions.

Alongside her clinical work, Siyanda is deeply committed to personal wellness and lifestyle balance. She maintains an active lifestyle that includes running, strength training, and swimming, reflecting her belief that physical activity and nutrition work hand-in-hand to support long-term health.

Siyanda also has a strong interest in faith-based mentorship and regularly facilitates Bible study discussions, creating engaging and thoughtful spaces for learning, reflection, and spiritual growth. Her approach combines biblical insight with practical life application, making scripture accessible and meaningful across different age groups.

With a heart for service and a commitment to holistic wellbeing, Siyanda continues to integrate her professional expertise, faith, and personal discipline to positively influence the lives of those around her.

PRESENTATION|S:

- The prevalence of malnutrition in infants and children with chronic kidney disease (CKD) in the Dora Nginza Hospital outpatient clinic
-

PRESENTER:

— Ms. Eunice **Njoroge**

Aga Khan University, Kenya | Stellenbosch University, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

— Eunice Njoroge is a nutrition researcher with a background in nutrition and public health, with a strong focus on maternal and child health. Her work centers on early-life determinants of growth and development, particularly within low-resource urban settings. She currently coordinates the Kenyan site for the Global Scales for Early Development (GSED) Norms Study, contributing to global efforts to standardize child neurodevelopmental assessment and strengthen measurement of early childhood outcomes.

Her research interests span complementary feeding practices, maternal dietary diversity, micronutrient status during pregnancy, and the intergenerational influences of maternal nutrition on child growth and developmental trajectories. She has extensive experience in community-based research and multidisciplinary collaboration across nutrition and child development projects. She is committed to generating evidence that informs policy and practice to strengthen maternal nutrition literacy and improve long-term child health outcomes.

Her research has examined the association between maternal complementary feeding knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) and infant anthropometric status in Nairobi, reflecting her broader interest in how maternal nutrition behaviors influence early growth trajectories.

PRESENTATION|S:

— The association between maternal complementary feeding KAP and infant anthropometric status in Kawangware, Nairobi County

PRESENTER:

— Ms. Suanné **Nolte**

University of Pretoria, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

— Suanné Nolte obtained her BSc Nutrition degree from the University of Pretoria in 2024 and is currently an MSc Nutrition student at the University of Pretoria. Her research focuses on maternal nutritional status, placental function, and birth and pregnancy outcomes in South Africa.

PRESENTATION|S:

— Early pregnancy BMI and MUAC as predictors of placental insufficiency in South African women

PRESENTER:

- Ms. Jacoba **Nothnagel**
University of South Africa (UNISA), South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

— OBJECTIVE

To further and create awareness of milk kefir (MK) in African countries, and specifically South Africa. Awareness of MK may lead to consumption by populations, thereby providing an affordable opportunity for present and future health.

EDUCATION

Masters of Consumer Science (Food and Nutrition) | UNISA
2016 TO 2025.

CURRENTLY UNISA ENROLLED PHD STUDENT.

EXPERIENCE

April 2014 to present date:

Complete 'Graduate Diploma of Kinesiopractic®' with the International College of Professional Kinesiology Practice (ICPKP). Obtain qualification as professional kinesiology instructor and commence own college for facilitation of all levels of ICPKP kinesiology. Provide classroom tutoring for all ICPKP kinesiology courses (Includes basic food and nutrition principles).

Offer kinesiology therapy sessions as a Wellness Councillor.

Cultivate own MK grains from 1 tablespoon kefir grains received as a gift (2014). Produce and sell artisanal MK and MK starter kits to produce homemade MK.

Start own sourdough culture from organic stone milled wheat flour (2012). Produce and sell artisanal sourdough bread and other baked goods (cakes, muffins, breads, scones, etc.) using sourdough and a combination of sourdough and MK for fermentation and proofing.

Present MK, sourdough and other baking and food workshops.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Health consciousness drives awareness and consumption of milk kefir as a probiotic food source

PRESENTER:

— Ms. Natascha **Olivier**

Private Practice, South Africa | Stellenbosch University, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Natascha Olivier is a registered dietitian with a Masters in Dietetics (UP), lactation consultant (SACLC), and doctoral candidate at the Division of Human Nutrition, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, at Stellenbosch University, South Africa. Her work focuses on infant and young child feeding (IYCF), particularly responsive feeding practices and their role in supporting healthy child development and obesity prevention.

In addition to her academic work, Natascha is the owner of a private practice focusing on paediatric nutrition and maternal and child health. She also has experience as a lecturer and co-supervises postgraduate research in the Department of Pharmacology at the University of Pretoria. She is passionate about translating research into practical guidance for caregivers and healthcare professionals, with the goal of supporting nurturing feeding relationships and healthier food environments for young children, and is regularly involved in radio interviews.

As both a researcher and a mother, she is deeply motivated to contribute to evidence-based strategies that empower families and improve early childhood nutrition outcomes in South Africa and other low- and middle-income settings.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Mapping the factors influencing food-drug interaction consultation: implications for professional boundaries and scope of practice in nutrition care
 - Responsive feeding in South Africa's nutrition transition: a socio-ecological strategy for early childhood obesity prevention
-

PRESENTER:

- Dr Imana **Pal**
Upes, India

BIOGRAPHY:

- Dr. Imana Pal is an Assistant Professor in the School of Health Sciences and Technology at the UPES, Dehradun, India. She holds a Ph.D. in Food and Nutrition from the University of Calcutta and has over a decade of experience in teaching, research, and academic mentorship. Her research focuses on sustainable food systems, public health nutrition, indigenous and underutilised foods, and the development of functional food products for disease prevention and health promotion.
Dr. Pal previously served as a Postdoctoral Fellow at Durban University of Technology, South Africa, where she contributed to research on food security, nutrition interventions, and sustainable food innovations. She has worked extensively on projects related to healthy school food environments (UNICEF), indigenous food promotion, and climate-smart nutrition strategies. Her work integrates nutrition science with community health and sustainability.
Her current research interests include the development of functional foods from indigenous crops, and value-added products from underutilised fruits and grains. Dr. Pal actively supervises postgraduate and PhD students and collaborates with international researchers on multidisciplinary nutrition and sustainability projects. She has presented her research at national and international conferences and continues to contribute to advancing nutrition science and sustainable dietary practices.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Development and Nutritional Evaluation of Value-Added Noodles Incorporating Black Wheat (*Triticum aestivum* L)
-

PRESENTER:

- Dr Rukudzo **Pamacheche**
University of South Africa, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Dr Rukudzo Pamacheche is a postdoctoral research fellow in the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences at the University of South Africa. Her research focus is directed towards consumer science, consumer decision-making and entrepreneurship as they relate to sustainable communities and responsible consumption. She holds a PhD in Marketing from the University of the Witwatersrand and experience in structural equation modelling and multivariate techniques applied to relationships among consumer behaviour, branding and entrepreneurship topics. She endeavours to pursue research in qualitative inquiry, driven by a desire to explore the complex underpinnings, uncover deep-seated insights from consumer experiences through rigorous interpretive methods and to promote theory development. She envisions contributing to knowledge and thought leadership in ethical research concerning consumer behaviour in the context of developing economies and sustainable consumption to benefit academia and society at large.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Unveiling social, cultural and information gaps in nutrition knowledge of local community-produced online food products
-

PRESENTER:

- Dr Catherine **Pereira-Kotze**
South African Medical Research Council, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Catherine (Katie) Pereira-Kotze is a part-time research consultant with the Health Systems Research Unit at the South African Medical Research Council, where she focuses on research and advocacy relating to infant and young child feeding, especially protection from commercial influence, and improvements in maternity protection. She also holds several other part-time roles, in the UK (Senior Nutritionist, First Steps Nutrition Trust) and globally (Policy Specialist Consultant with Alive & Thrive East Asia Pacific / FHI 360).

PRESENTATION|S:

- Gaps in workplace breastfeeding support research in low- and middle-income countries: A scoping review (2016–2025)
-

PRESENTER:

- Dr Beulah **Pretorius**
University of Pretoria, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Dr. Beulah Pretorius is an NRF C-rated researcher in the Department of Animal Science, Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences, at the University of Pretoria. She also serves as an extraordinary lecturer in the School of Health Systems and Public Health within the Faculty of Health Sciences. In addition, she was the project manager of the ARUA UKRI/GCRF CaBFoodS-Africa project, which focused on strengthening research capacity for food security across Africa.
Dr. Pretorius is a nutrition scientist focusing on micronutrients, food composition, and nutrient bioavailability. Her research integrates both the quantity and quality of nutrients in foods to inform strategies that improve nutrition and advance sustainable food security. She is passionate about developing evidence-based nutrition solutions that can improve the health and well-being of diverse populations.
As food systems become increasingly homogenised and reliant on a limited number of foods, dietary diversity declines, contributing to micronutrient deficiencies among vulnerable populations. Dr. Pretorius' research therefore explores the nutritional potential of less familiar and underutilised foods to support more diverse, nutrient-rich diets.
She has extensive experience in nutrient analysis of food and feed, and previously managed an accredited analytical laboratory. She holds an MSc in Biochemistry and a PhD in Human Nutrition.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Dairy Snacks or Yoghurt Alternatives? Nutritional Insights into Dairy Snacks Marketed to Children in South Africa

PRESENTER:

- Ms. Sanchia **Prinsloo**
Stellenbosch University, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Sanchia Prinsloo is a registered dietitian who holds a Master of Public Health in Nutrition (Cum Laude) from Stellenbosch University. Her research focused on improving nutrition in early childhood, particularly strategies to increase vegetable intake among young children in early childhood development centres (ECDs). Through this work, she developed a strong interest in early childhood nutrition and how early learning environments can positively shape children's dietary habits and food preferences. Sanchia has over five years of experience across clinical care and community health, including work within NGO settings serving underserved communities. She has been involved in programme implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and collaborative initiatives aimed at strengthening community nutrition services and improving access to nutritious food. Through her research and professional practice, she aims to promote sustainable nutrition interventions in resource-constrained settings, with a particular interest in translating evidence into scalable, community-responsive programmes. She is passionate about bridging clinical nutrition expertise with public health strategy to support equitable health outcomes and create healthier food environments for children and families.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Early Bites for Better Nutrition: Intervention to increase vegetable intake in South African early childhood development centres
 - Equity on the plate: Factors influencing vegetable provision and menu dietary diversity in South African early childhood development centres
-

PRESENTER:

- Ms. Stacey-Leigh **Pullen**
Nelson Mandela University, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Stacey-Leigh Pullen is a Dietitian by profession working in the clinical nutrition field at a tertiary hospital in Gqeberha, Eastern Cape. She matriculated in 2011 from Groenberg Secondary School in the farming areas of Grabouw. Stacey-Leigh holds an undergraduate degree in Dietetics from the University of the Western Cape, where she graduated in 2016. In 2022 she completed her Master of Science Degree in Dietetics from Nelson Mandela University. Her MSc Dietetics focused on identifying risk factors associated with preterm infants at a district hospital in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. Stacey-Leigh has a keen interest in the field of prematurity, having spent nearly five years at a District hospital in Bisho, Eastern Cape, where she worked in severely under-resourced conditions. Her experience during this time ignited a passion to find out why so many pre-terms are born in the first place and subsequently how improving and standardising the management of these vulnerable babies, can improve their outcomes. She is currently enrolled in a PhD Dietetics program at the Nelson Mandela University, with her research focused on developing and testing a protocol for preterm infant management at district hospitals in the Eastern Cape, South Africa.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Development and Testing of a Protocol on Preterm Infant Management at District Level Hospitals in the Eastern Cape, South Africa
-

PRESENTER:

- Ms. Mavis **Ranwedzi**
National Department of Basic Education, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Mavis Ranwedzi is a public health practitioner registered as a Nutritionist with the Health Professions Council of South Africa, and a researcher specialising in food safety, school nutrition, and strengthening public health systems. She is affiliated with the National Department of Basic Education, where she contributes to the implementation and improvement of the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP), one of the largest school feeding programmes in the country. Her work focuses on strengthening food safety governance, compliance, and capacity-building across the school food value chain to protect learners' health and well-being. Ranwedzi's research interests centre on food safety risk management in institutional feeding programmes, with particular emphasis on food handlers' knowledge and practices, hazard identification in school food environments, and the development of food safety models to improve programme implementation. Her doctoral research focuses on developing a food safety framework for schools implementing the NSNP in the Tshwane South District, Gauteng Province, integrating public health principles with food safety management systems. She collaborates with government departments, academic institutions, and public health practitioners to promote evidence-based approaches to school nutrition and food safety. Ranwedzi contributes to strengthening safe and healthy school food environments in South Africa.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Food Safety Hazards and Health Outcomes in Tshwane South District: A Learner-Centred Assessment of the NSNP Environment
-

PRESENTER:

- Ms. Imani **Ravhudzulo**
Tshwane University of Technology, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Imani Ravhudzulo is a PhD candidate in crop science who focuses on functional foods, the nutritional value of underutilized crops like finger millet, and seed biochemistry. Her study looks on how processing techniques affect the functional qualities, antinutritional elements, and protein content of products made from millet. She has expertise with laboratory methods such as antioxidant assay, protein analysis, and antinutrient determination. Her efforts support the development of sustainable agricultural systems and enhance food security in line with the research priorities of the National Research Foundation.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Ultrasound-Assisted Soaking effects on Phytonutrient Content, Antioxidant Properties, and Antinutrients (Trypsin Inhibitors) in Finger Millet *Eleusine coracana* (L.) Gaertn.) Seeds
-

PRESENTER:

- Ms. Odette **Roux**
North-West University, South Africa,

BIOGRAPHY:

- I am a clinical dietitian working in the public health sector in Gauteng, South Africa. My work focuses on supporting patients in a government hospital setting, where I am involved in nutrition care, nutrition support, and health promotion.
Alongside my clinical work, I am currently completing my PhD at North-West University. My research interests include public health nutrition, food policy, hypertension, and strategies to reduce sodium intake. My doctoral research explores South Africa's sodium-reduction regulation (R.214), and how it may influence food prices, household food spending, and ultimately hypertension outcomes.
I am particularly interested in how nutrition policy translates into real-world health outcomes for South Africans. My goal is to contribute to research that strengthens the link between clinical dietetics, public health policy, and evidence-based practice.
I am also passionate about maternal and infant nutrition and completed my Lactation Consultant qualification in 2024. Supporting breastfeeding mothers and promoting early-life nutrition is an important part of my professional journey.
Through both my clinical work and research, I hope to contribute to improving nutrition and long-term health outcomes in South Africa.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Meeting the benchmark? South Africa's R.214 sodium regulation compared with WHO global targets
 - More than market noise? Price dynamics of R.214-regulated foods in South Africa
-

PRESENTER:

- Ms. Sanrika **Sahadeo**
Durban University of Technology, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- I recently completed a Degree in Master of Applied Science in Food and Nutrition, with a strong research interest in food and nutrition sustainability and their connections to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). I am currently pursuing my PhD at the Durban University of Technology in Food and Nutrition. My work focuses on promoting sustainable food systems, improving public health nutrition, and supporting global efforts toward achieving food security. I am keen to collaborate on interdisciplinary projects that bridge nutrition science, sustainability, and policy development.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Promoting sustainable dietary practices through the implementation of the South African Food Boost University Challenge (SAFBUC)
-

PRESENTER:

- Prof Hettie **Schönfeldt**
University of Pretoria, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Professor Schönfeldt is an advocate for nutrition research, promoting excellence through the creation, translation and dissemination of science-based information into policies, programmes and training programmes both nationally and internationally. She publishes evidence on why country-specific food composition data is essential to make it possible to interpret the dietary outcomes of countries. She serves as scientific advisor to AFROFOODS, a network on the African continent, forming part of the IUNS/UNU/FAO INFOODS Task Force. She holds a Tier 1 South African Department of Science and Innovation /National Research Foundation Research Chair in Nutrition and Food Security and is a member of the UN High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Food consumption and dietary diversity of adults living in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, and Eastern and Western Cape provinces of South Africa

PRESENTER:

- Mr. Nkululeko Milton **Semenekane**
University of Pretoria, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Milton Semenekane is a nutrition researcher and PhD candidate with a strong interest in improving child nutrition and food systems in South Africa. His research focuses on the role of traditional green leafy vegetables in addressing micronutrient deficiencies among young children, particularly those aged 2–6 years. His doctoral work explores how Early Childhood Development Centres (ECDCs) can support the promotion and integration of traditional green leafy vegetables into feeding programmes to improve dietary diversity and nutritional outcomes among children.
Milton has experience in public health nutrition research, programme coordination, and community-based fieldwork. His work combines qualitative and quantitative research approaches to understand institutional practices, caregiver perceptions, and policy opportunities that influence child feeding environments. He is particularly interested in culturally appropriate, sustainable food-based strategies that strengthen nutrition security in low- and middle-income settings.
Through his research, Milton aims to contribute evidence that informs policy, strengthens early childhood nutrition programmes, and promotes the use of indigenous and locally available foods. He is passionate about translating research into practical interventions that support healthier food environments for young children and empower communities to preserve and utilise traditional food knowledge.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Optimal consumption of traditional green leafy vegetables among young children aged 2–6 years in South Africa: a scoping review
-

PRESENTER:

- Dr Marita **Serfontein**
University of the Free State, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Dr. Marita Serfontein is a registered Dietician with more than 20 years of experience in clinical nutrition, research, and public health. She completed her PhD in Dietetics and Nutrition through the University of the Free State, where her research focused on maternal nutrition and the impact of nutritional supplementation during pregnancy on maternal and birth outcomes in South Africa. Her doctoral research evaluated the effects of a balanced energy-protein supplement fortified with multiple micronutrients on maternal nutritional status and birth outcomes among pregnant women in resource-constrained settings.
Dr. Serfontein is currently affiliated with the University of South Africa (UNISA) as an Adjunct Academic. Her research interests focus on maternal and child nutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, antenatal supplementation strategies, and the developmental origins of health and disease. She has a particular interest in understanding how maternal nutrition interventions can improve birth outcomes and reduce intergenerational health risks.
Her work aims to bridge the gap between research, policy, and practice by generating evidence that can inform nutrition interventions and public health strategies to improve maternal and child health in South Africa and other low- and middle-income countries.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Balanced energy-protein supplementation fortified with multiple micronutrients and maternal nutritional outcomes in pregnancy: a community-based study in South Africa
 - Folic acid in South Africa's antenatal care: Too much, too late?
-

PRESENTER:

- Ms. Hlengiwe **Sokhela**
University of Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Ms. Hlengiwe Sokhela is a registered Dietitian with a BSc in Dietetics (2014), a Postgraduate Diploma in Dietetics (2015), and a Master's in Dietetics (2024). She began her professional journey as a Community Service Dietitian at Montebello Hospital, gaining hands-on clinical experience that laid the foundation for her career in public health, community nutrition, policy implementation, and university lecturing.
A published author and researcher, Ms. Sokhela focuses on nutrition counselling principles, ethics, and evidence-based practice. She has extensive experience designing, implementing, and evaluating nutrition programs and is passionate about training and mentoring healthcare professionals to deliver high-quality, ethical nutrition care.
Her work bridges clinical practice, public health initiatives, and academic research, ensuring interventions are scientifically informed and practically effective. Ms. Sokhela continues to advance professional standards in dietetics while promoting healthier communities through innovative nutrition programs.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Assessment of the nutritional composition of home-prepared complementary foods in selected rural and urban communities of KwaZulu-Natal

PRESENTER:

- Ms. Hermina (Ermi) **Spies**
University of the Free State, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Mrs. Ermi (HC) Spies studied BSc Dietetics at the University of the Free State (UFS) from 2000-2004 and after that completed her community service year in the Eastern Free State. She has been a practicing registered dietitian since 2006. She worked in the government sector for four years and has worked part-time in private practice since then. She has been involved in student training part-time at the UFS since 2008 and was subsequently appointed in 2018 as a permanent lecturer. She presents at scientific congresses, supervises master's students, and is an external moderator for other South African Universities. She obtained her MSc Dietetics degree in 2018 and is currently enrolled for her PhD in clinical dietetics.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Knowledge and Reported Treatment of Patients with Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS) in South Africa

PRESENTER:

- Ms. Julia **Stewart**
University of Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Ms Julia Stewart is a Registered Dietitian based in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal. She completed a Bachelor of Science in Dietetics and Human Nutrition (Cum Laude) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) in 2022, where she received several academic awards recognising excellence across clinical, community, and food service dietetics. She completed her community service at St Mary's Hospital in Marianhill, where she managed the dietetics department and implemented enteral feeding protocols for inpatients.
She subsequently worked in a group practice for two years, providing clinical nutrition care to both inpatients and outpatients. Her experience includes intensive care nutrition, chronic disease management, and multidisciplinary team collaboration. During this time, she also mentored and supported newly qualified dietitians.
Ms Stewart is currently pursuing a Master's degree at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, with a research focus on child nutrition and interventions aimed at improving nutritional outcomes.

PRESENTATION[S]:

- Reformulating chocolate biscuits with finger millet to improve nutritional composition and consumer acceptability
-

PRESENTER:

- Dr Hildegard **Strydom**
Private, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- I obtained my B Dietetics degree in 2001 at the University of Pretoria. I worked at the National Health Service in the United Kingdom from January 2002 to November 2003. Upon my return to South Africa, I started a private practice with a special focus on the treatment of diabetes, insulin resistance and weight management. I received my Master's degree in 2009, with research focusing on South African Dietitians' knowledge of implementing a low-Glycaemic Index diet for the management of diabetes. In 2025, I obtained my PhD from the University of Pretoria. My doctoral research focused on the implementation of the glycemic index, glycemic load and food insulin index in the dietary treatment of diabetes. My PhD included a scoping review on the food insulin index, development of a validated adherence tool to measure patients' adherence to diabetic dietary principles and a cohort study on how adherence to glycemic load and food insulin improves blood glucose control among people with diabetes. I have been involved in writing diet-related information sheets for pharmaceutical companies, consulted for various diet-related magazine articles, served as a food labelling specialist and did training sessions on diabetic dietary intervention for medical doctors, dietitians and pharmacists.

PRESENTATION[S]:

- Implementation of the Food Insulin Index in determining insulin demand in diabetes: Best practice guidelines
-

PRESENTER:

- Dr Phumudzo **Tshiambara**
University of Pretoria, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Dr Phumudzo Tshiambara is a lecturer in the Department of Human Nutrition at the University of Pretoria. Since 2019, she has coordinated and lectured third- and fourth-year community nutrition modules, contributing to undergraduate training and community engagement initiatives. She holds a PhD in Nutrition from the Department of Consumer and Food Sciences at the University of Pretoria. She recently completed the Management Development Programme through University of Pretoria Enterprises and the Strengthening Postgraduate Supervision course at Rhodes University, and is currently enrolled in an additional short course focused on postgraduate supervision at the same institution.
Prior to joining the University of Pretoria, Dr Tshiambara worked as a National Research Foundation intern at North-West University, where she also completed her MSc in Nutrition. She is a registered nutritionist with the HPCSA and a member of both the Nutrition Society of South Africa and the Association for Dietetics in South Africa.
Her research focuses on maternal and child nutrition, particularly infant and young child feeding, food and nutrition security, and indigenous foods. She has published in accredited journals, co-authored a book chapter, presented at national and international conferences, and serves as a peer reviewer for several nutrition journals.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Infant anaemia and haemoglobin levels in high hiv-prevalent settings: findings from the Siyakhula study, South Africa
-

PRESENTER:

- Ms. Sedzani **Tshidzumba**
University of Venda, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Ms. Sedzani Elsie Tshidzumba is a lecturer at the University of Venda, Department of Nutrition. She holds a Masters degree in Public Nutrition from the University of Venda. Her research interests are IKS and sustainable food systems.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Metabolites and nutrient composition of indigenous okra (*Abelmoschus Esculentus*) pods and leaves

PRESENTER:

- Ms. Pauline **Tsikayi**
North-West University, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Pauline Tsikayi is a PhD candidate at the Centre of Excellence for Nutrition of the North-West University in Potchefstroom. She holds a background in nutritional sciences, with a focus on micronutrient supplementation and child health and nutrition. She recently completed her MSc in Nutrition with Nuclear techniques which is an emerging field of study supporting the use of safe and effective nuclear techniques in nutrition research. Her research explored the interplay of the obesity pandemic, gut integrity, iron absorption and omega-3 long-chain polyunsaturated fatty acid supplementation. She has been involved in research projects investigating iron absorption using stable iron isotopes, the role of omega-3 fatty acid supplementation in resolving gut integrity, gut integrity and exercise and its implications on iron absorption. Her work aims to contribute to the body of evidence in the scientific community around issues to do with iron supplementation and anaemia especially among women in low- and middle-income countries.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Gut integrity and iron absorption in young South African women living with obesity and supplemented with omega-3 fatty acids
-

PRESENTER:

- Dr Mary **Uyoga**
North-West University, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Mary Uyoga is a Senior postdoctoral research fellow at the Centre of Excellence for Nutrition at the North-West University, Potchefstroom campus and an alumna of the African Nutrition leadership Programme. She holds a Masters in Epidemiology (Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya) and Doctorate in Human Nutrition (ETH, Zurich, Switzerland). Mary's research focusses on iron nutrition and she has previously conducted several clinical trials using the stable isotope technique to improve uptake of iron in iron deficient infants through fortified complementary foods. In her postdoctoral research she expanded her research interests to women of reproductive age where she's investigating omega-3 fatty acids as an approach to improve iron absorption and status in obesity, the role of prebiotics to improve iron status and absorption in athletes, and the long-term iron requirements using the stable iron isotope dilution method.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Omega-3 LCPUFA supplementation did not reduce inflammation to improve iron absorption in South African women living with overweight or obesity
-

PRESENTERS:

- Prof Louise **Van Den Berg**
University of Pretoria, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Professor Louise van den Berg is Head of the Department of Human Nutrition at the University of Pretoria, South Africa. She is a registered dietitian and researcher whose work spans clinical nutrition, public health nutrition, and nutritional epidemiology. Her research focuses on food insecurity, the food environment, anthropometry across the life course, maternal and child nutrition, and the Developmental Origins of Health and Disease.
She has led and collaborated on national and institutional research projects examining nutritional status and dietary patterns in vulnerable populations, including university students, adolescents, women attending antenatal clinics, and children in resource-constrained settings. Her work has contributed to peer-reviewed publications addressing malnutrition in all its forms within the South African context.
Professor van den Berg supervises master's and doctoral students and serves as examiner and peer reviewer for local and international journals. Her current research interests include dietary inflammatory potential, neonatal and early-life body composition, and systems-based analyses of food environments. She is committed to rigorous, evidence-based inquiry that informs clinical practice, public health policy, and sustainable nutrition strategies in low and middle-income countries.

PRESENTATION[S]:

- Providing nutrition care for those with Cerebral Palsy: Experiences of healthcare workers in the South African public health system
-

PRESENTER:

- Ms. Maria **van der Merwe**
ADSA, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Maria van der Merwe is a South African dietitian, public health nutritionist, and health systems researcher with more than 26 years' experience across government, academia, and consultancy. She holds a Master's degree in Nutrition (cum laude) from Stellenbosch University and an Advanced Health Management qualification from Yale School of Public Health. She is registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa as both a dietitian and nutritionist.
Maria currently works as an independent public health and nutrition consultant, with a focus on public health and health leadership training at postgraduate level along with health policy and guideline development. She has held senior leadership roles within the Mpumalanga Department of Health, where she led large-scale maternal and child nutrition, food service, and workforce development initiatives.
She is a President of the Association for Dietetics in South Africa and has served extensively in professional governance and advocacy roles. Maria holds an academic appointment as Faculty with the University of Warwick's iheed programme. She has contributed to numerous peer-reviewed publications and international research collaborations focused on community participation and health system strengthening.

PRESENTATION[S]:

- Care2Care: Building mental wellness capacity among dietitians and other healthcare professionals in South Africa
 - Leading with integrity: Governance reform and ethical leadership in the Association for Dietetics in South Africa
-

PRESENTER:

- Ms. Georgia **Van Der Walt**
North-West University, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Georgia vd Walt is a registered dietitian. She completed her Bachelor of Science in Dietetics and Master of Nutrition (with a focus on Sport Nutrition) at the North-West University, South Africa, graduating with distinction and completing her master's degree within the minimum time.
Her research and professional interests focus on evidence-based nutritional strategies to optimise athletic performance, body composition, recovery, immune health, and long-term athlete wellbeing. Through her master's training, she gained applied experience working with university level athletes. Georgia completed her community service year as a clinical dietitian at Boitumelo Hospital in Kroonstad in 2023, working within a multidisciplinary medical team and providing nutrition care across medical, surgical, paediatric, and critical care settings.
She is currently enrolled in the International Olympic Committee (IOC) Diploma in Sports Nutrition, further advancing her expertise in sport nutrition while in the process of establishing her own private practice.

PRESENTATION|S:

- The inflammatory and antioxidant potential of habitual diets of female athletes from a university in South Africa
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PRESENTER:

- Dr Bianca **Van Der Westhuizen**
University of South Africa (UNISA), South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Dr Bianca van der Westhuizen is a Senior Lecturer in Nutrition in the Department of Life and Consumer Sciences at the University of South Africa (UNISA). She holds a PhD in Nutrition from the Centre of Excellence for Nutrition at North-West University. Her research focuses on public health nutrition, particularly the obesogenic and digital food environments in South Africa and their influence on dietary behaviour and non-communicable diseases. She also has an interest in nutrition policy and knowledge translation to support evidence-informed decision-making. Dr van der Westhuizen teaches undergraduate nutrition modules through open distance learning and supervises postgraduate research on food environments and consumer nutrition.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Likes, Follows and Food Choices: Social Media Healthy-Eating Content and Diet Quality in South African Adults
- Monitoring digital food retail: a pilot application of the INFORMAS online grocery protocol in South Africa

PRESENTER:

- Ms. Dr Averalda Eldorine **van Graan**
South African Medical Research Council, South Africa | Stellenbosch University, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Averalda van Graan is employed as the SAFOODS Manager at the South African Medical Research Council and holds extra ordinary appointments at the University of Stellenbosch and iHeed. She joined the SAMRC after employment in Clinical Dietetics, Food Service and Academia, with appointments as Senior Lecturer, Program Manager and Academic Program Manager. She is a Council Member of the Nutrition Society of South Africa and a Facilitator and Team Member of the African Nutrition Leadership Programme.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Developing DI-FoodLink: An API to Link DIASA, A Dietary Intake Assessment Application to FoodFinder, A Dietary Intake Analysis Program.
- SAFOODS Food Data Cleaning and Coding Services: A Pilot Study on the use of food composition data beyond traditional applications.

PRESENTERS:

- Dr Machteld **van Lieshout**
The Hague University of Applied Sciences, South Holland, Netherlands
- Ms Wendy **Scholtes-Bos**
The Hague University of Applied Sciences, South Holland, Netherlands
- Ms Sanrika **Sahadeo**
Durban University of Technology, South Africa

BIOGRAPHIES:

- **Dr Machteld van Lieshout** is associate professor Healthy Nutrition for a Healthy Next Generation at The Hague University of Applied Sciences (THUAS). She completed her Master in Nutrition & Health (1995) at Wageningen University & Research (WUR) in the Netherlands and earned her PhD in Nutrition, Food Technology, and Biotechnology (2001) at WUR. She held research positions in Scotland and North-West University in Potchefstroom, South Africa and worked as nutritional consultant, for KraftHeinz, The Netherlands and independently. Additionally, she co-founded the Nutrition Consultants Cooperative.
Since 2017, Machteld works at THUAS where she combines research at the Research Group Healthy Lifestyle in a Supporting Environment with teaching at the Department of Nutrition & Dietetics. Her focus is on promoting a healthy lifestyle for young people (ages 2-24 yrs-old) and advancing the development and implementation of nutritional innovations. She is involved in projects such as: Westlandse onderwijsBooST, where a challenge-based learning concept for tackling wicked problems through joint education for vocational and university students is being developed; and the Food Boost Challenge, a Community-Up approach to engage youth and food system partners in promoting healthy and sustainable food choices.
Machteld is a member of the platform for professors in Food, Nutrition and Health.
- **Ms Wendy Scholtes-Bos** is a Senior Researcher at The Hague University of Applied Sciences, South Holland, Netherlands.
- **Ms Sanrika Sahadeo** I recently completed a Degree in Master of Applied Science in Food and Nutrition, with a strong research interest in food and nutrition sustainability and their connections to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). I am currently pursuing my PhD at the Durban University of Technology in Food and Nutrition. My work focuses on promoting sustainable food systems, improving public health nutrition, and supporting global efforts toward achieving food security. I am keen to collaborate on interdisciplinary projects that bridge nutrition science, sustainability, and policy development.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Scaling youth engagement for healthy and sustainable diets: Lessons and opportunities from the Food Boost Challenge Approach

PRESENTER:

- Prof Evette **Van Niekerk**
Stellenbosch University, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Evette van Niekerk is an Associate Professor in Therapeutic Nutrition in the Division of Human Nutrition, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences at Stellenbosch University. Her research focuses on maternal, infant and young child nutrition, neonatal growth, breastmilk, the gut microbiome, and nutritional support of hospitalised patients. She has supervised numerous postgraduate students, published widely in peer-reviewed journals, and is actively involved in clinical nutrition research and training. Her work has contributed to the development of an innovative medical device for preterm infant growth assessment.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Introduction of the new Dietetics and Nutrition Board of the HPCSA
 - Adherence to Hospital Discharge Criteria and Relapse Rates in Children with Severe Acute Malnutrition
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PRESENTER:

- Dr Annette **Van Onselen**
University of South Africa (UNISA), South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Dr van Onselen is currently a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Life and Consumer Sciences, College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences at the University of South Africa (UNISA). She is also appointed as an Honorary Lecturer at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Dr van Onselen started her academic career full-time 15 years ago. She has graduated 10 master's students and 5 PhD students. and published in national and international journals, and regularly presents at international conferences, with the latest at the IUNS-25 conference in Paris. Currently, CNA funding was also received from Unisa in 2025 for her research on microgreens in a niche area, and she collaborated with several European Universities to develop a proposal for a nutritional product. This year, one of her PhD students is graduating from Stirling University in Scotland, demonstrating her passion and dedication to her work.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Evaluating the consumer's use and application of microgreens in Newcastle, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

PRESENTERS:

- Dr Cornelia **Conradie**
- Prof Tertia **Van Zyl**
North-West University, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Dr Cornelia Conradie is a Senior Lecturer in Nutrition at North-West University, with a research focus on nutrition for optimal childhood growth and development. Her work spans maternal and pregnancy outcomes, management of severe acute malnutrition, and dietary intake methodologies to accurately describe dietary intake of the study population. Dr Conradie is also an alumna and member of the African Nutrition Leadership Programme, where she leads a short course aimed at developing nutrition leaders across the continent.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Effect of a multi-grain legume-based cereal on growth in young children: Preliminary Findings from the StartWell and Grow Study
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PRESENTER:

- Prof Corinna May **Walsh**
University of the Free State, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Corinna Walsh is a professor in the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics at the University of the Free State. Her research focuses on the Developmental Origins of Health and Disease, HIV, and malnutrition, with a particular interest in nutritional health, food security, and the impact of transitions from traditional to Western lifestyles on health. Corinna has published extensively and has supervised over 50 master's and doctoral students. She previously served on the Board of the South African Medical Research Council and is a past president of the Nutrition Society of South Africa.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Nutritional Status and Household Food Security of Pregnant Women: Insights from the NuEMI Study
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PRESENTER:

- Dr Mariaan **Wicks**
North-West University, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Mariaan Wicks is a registered dietitian and senior lecturer at the Centre of Excellence for Nutrition, North-West University, South Africa. Her work focuses on nutrition-based strategies to improve dietary quality, with particular interest in nutrient profiling and food labelling. She is an active and dedicated member of the Association for Dietetics in South Africa (ADSA) and currently serves as Subject Head of Dietetics at North-West University.

PRESENTATION|S:

- From the science of nutrient profiling to digital innovation: the development of NutriRank in South Africa
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PRESENTER:

- Ms. Chido **Zambuko**
University of Pretoria, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Chido Linda Zambuko; MSc Nutrition (University of Pretoria, South Africa); BSc Nutrition (University of Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe). She is a PhD candidate in Nutrition at the University of Pretoria, with over 13 years of professional experience in maternal and child health, nutrition programming, and public health systems. She is currently conducting research on how antenatal iron biomarkers influence placental angiogenic markers, placental function, birth outcomes, and infant growth. She has published research on school-based nutrition education interventions. Chido Zambuko has extensive experience in nutritional epidemiology, programme implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and data analysis. She has served as a District Nutritionist, where she led nutrition programmes and strengthened community-based interventions, and contributed at provincial level. Through her work, she seeks to inform evidence-based strategies to improve maternal and child nutrition. Her research interests include epidemiology, maternal and child health, child nutrition and nutrigenomics.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Association between maternal iron status and diet quality measures among pregnant women in Tshwane, South Africa
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PRESENTER:

- Ms. Zoleka **Zuma**
North-West University, South Africa

BIOGRAPHY:

- Zoleka Zuma is a Registered Dietitian and Junior lecturer, with a strong interest in clinical nutrition research and the role of nutrition in disease processes. She holds a Master's degree in Dietetics , where her research examined iron status and the impact of body composition and inflammation on iron status. Her current research interests lie at the intersection of clinical nutrition, infectious diseases, and inflammation. Her current research specifically focuses on how TB related inflammation may be modulated by nutritional therapy specifically the immunonutrient omega-3.
Zoleka is passionate about advancing evidence-based nutrition practice and contributing to research that strengthens the integration of nutrition into disease management within the South African healthcare context. Her long-term goal is to contribute to research that informs clinical nutrition strategies aimed at improving outcomes in populations affected by infectious and inflammatory diseases.

PRESENTATION|S:

- Effects of adjunct omega-3 long chain polyunsaturated fatty acids in pulmonary tuberculosis patients: a study protocol
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