

# EDITOR'S FOCUS

## Does the introduction of a management protocol improve the control of type 2 diabetes?

Gill, Ross, Pirie and Esterhuizen conducted a retrospective record review of one hundred and twenty randomly selected type 2 diabetic patients to assess the efficacy of the clinical management at the Medical Outpatients Department of Addington Hospital, Durban, South Africa after introduction of a diabetes monitoring and management protocol. The main findings of the study showed that there were some improvements in the mean HbA<sub>1c</sub>, blood pressure goals and mean BMI, while the serum lipid levels rose significantly from 26% in 2005 to 73% in 2009. They concluded that despite the introduction of the protocol, it was only the glycaemic control that was within target as most of the non-glycaemic goals were sub-optimal and did not improve over the study period. These findings have serious implications in South Africa, as diabetes is one of the non-communicable diseases targeted for control by the National Department of Health (NDOH).

## Emotional intelligence and locus of control of adult breast cancer patients receiving treatment: a relatively new research area in South Africa

Breast cancer is the most prevalent women cancer in South Africa. Brown and Swartz investigated the emotional intelligence and locus of control in an adult breast cancer population on cancer treatment at various sites in the Eastern Cape. Literature indicates that emotion-focused coping strategies are positively linked to the psychological and physical adjustment of breast cancer patients receiving treatment. Their findings indicate that patients with higher levels of emotional intelligence possess more internal locus of control orientations, while patients with lower emotional intelligence possess more external locus of control orientations. This is a novel study in a relatively untouched research field in South Africa.

## Hazardous alcohol drinking patterns during adolescence in South Africa

Ghuman, Meyer-Weitz and Knight conducted a cross-sectional, self-administered survey among students in grades 11 and 12, in purposively selected schools with mixed race groups in a southern KwaZulu-Natal district, South Africa. About 54% reported having used alcohol before, while 14.5% had their first drink before the age of 13. The students who were more

likely to report binge drinking in the preceding month were: older, white male students, having often seen their fathers and mothers drunk and have friends who frequently use alcohol. They concluded that while older, white male students were at risk for hazardous drinking patterns and the significant influence of peer and parental alcohol use should not be underestimated in all population groups. The NDOH's strategy on the re-engineering of the primary health care has a focus on improved school-based health programme. It is hoped that preventive measures on alcohol use among adolescents will feature prominently in this programme.

## Depression and adherence to antiretroviral therapy in HIV-positive patients

The authors of this study explored the association between depressive symptoms and adherence to ART among people living with human immunodeficiency virus (PLHIV) in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, as there is limited data from developing countries. Sixty-two percent showed higher than threshold levels on the depression scale, and 32% were less than 95% adherent to ART. The authors concluded that there was a high prevalence of major depression in this study population but no significant association found between high depression scores and non-adherence to ART. These study findings indicate that from a developing world perspective, that PLHIV have high prevalence of major depression but this did not affect their adherence to ART.

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## References

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