

## Units of alcohol in South Africa

In Chapter 8 of the *Handbook of Family Medicine*<sup>1</sup> (third edition), with reference to alcohol use disorders, it is implied that, in South Africa, one unit of alcohol is 10 g of alcohol. The definition of a standard drink varies between countries.<sup>2</sup> While there seems to be no legal definition for the size of a standard drink in South Africa, it is accepted that one unit is 12 g alcohol, while the guidelines for safe consumption per week are 21 units for men and 14 units for women.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, in the calculation of the number of grams of alcohol in alcoholic beverages, no allowance is made for the density of ethanol (0.79 g/ml at room temperature).<sup>4</sup> Thus, in the example given, if Peter drinks seven beers (375 ml) with 5% alcohol content and two bottles (750 ml) of red wine per week, he actually consumes 270 g in one week ( $7 \times 375 \times 0.05 \times 0.79 = 103.7$  g plus  $750 \times 2 \times 0.14 \times 0.79 = 165.9$  g); and not 341 g. At 12 g per unit, he is only 18 g over his safe limit of 21 units or 252 g. According to the

handbook calculation, he is 131 g over the limit. We can give Peter the benefit of the correction and not be killjoys!

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## References

1. Handbook of family medicine. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. In: Mash B, editor. Cape Town: Oxford University Press; 2011.
2. Department of Mental Health and Substance Dependence Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health Cluster. International guide for monitoring alcohol consumption and related harm. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2000.
3. International drinking guidelines. International Centre for Alcohol Policies [homepage on the Internet]. c2012. Available from: <http://www.icap.org/table/Internationaldrinkingguidelines>
4. Ferner R, Chambers J. Alcohol intake: measure for measure. *BMJ*. 2001;323(7327):1439-1440.



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## 7<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL PAIN SYMPOSIUM

University of Pretoria, Endorsed by Pain SA



Saturday, 29<sup>th</sup> September 2012 (8:00-17:00)

Sanlam Auditorium, Main Campus – University of Pretoria

Introduction and overview	<i>Prof Helgard Meyer</i>
Pharmacotherapy for chronic pain	<i>Dr Kim Outhoff</i>
Dysmenorrhoea	<i>Prof Leon Snyman</i>
Common running injuries	<i>Dr Christa J van Rensburg</i>
Chronic low back pain	<i>Dr Jacques Gilau</i>
Behavioural therapy in chronic pain	<i>Ms Bev Bolton</i>
Chronic pelvic pain	<i>Prof Gerhard Lindeque</i>
Interventions for chronic pain. Do they work?	<i>Dr Milton Raff</i>
Abuse of codeine combination analgesics	<i>Dr Gerhard Grobler</i>
When is a headache dangerous?	<i>Dr Johan Smuts</i>
The role of diet in inflammatory pain disorders	<i>Dr Nelly Silvis</i>
HIV related pain disorders	<i>Prof Peter Kamerman</i>
Opioids in cancer pain – clinical/ ethical issues	<i>Dr Liz Gwyther</i>
Adverse effects of NSAIDs	<i>Dr Jacques Snyman</i>

17:30 – Short Dinner Symposium: National Health Insurance  
Adv Elsabe Klinck

18:15 - Social function: Big screen rugby test and “spitbraai”

Any enquiries, full programme and registration form, please contact:  
Doris at (012) 373-1096 (email: [doris.bosch@up.ac.za](mailto:doris.bosch@up.ac.za))  
or Sanet at (012) 373-1018/9 (email: [sanet.cloete@up.ac.za](mailto:sanet.cloete@up.ac.za))

Current Guidelines Symposium: 10 Major Clinical Disorders

Sunday, 30<sup>th</sup> September 2012 (8:00-13:00)

Cardiovascular risk factors – current evidence	<i>Prof James Ker</i>
Guidelines for prevention and early detection of cervical cancer	<i>Prof Gerhard Lindeque</i>
Diabetes Mellitus – current guidelines for diagnosis and treatment	<i>Prof Paul Rheeder</i>
Osteo-arthritis – current perspectives	<i>Prof Mahmood Ally</i>
Fibromyalgia	<i>Prof Helgard Meyer</i>
Asthma and allergy in children	<i>Prof Robin Green</i>
New South African neuropathic pain guidelines	<i>Dr Milton Raff</i>
HIV / AIDS and tuberculosis – the reality in 2012	<i>Prof Lynne Webber</i>
Maternal mortality – a major epidemic in SA	<i>Prof Bob Pattinson</i>
Initial management of a seriously injured patient	<i>Prof Dries Engelbrecht</i>
Integrating care and quality improvement – ethical perspectives	<i>Prof Jannie Hugo</i>

Followed by first session:

**SA National Pharmacology Congress Mini symposium: Obesity in 2012 (13:30-15:30)**  
(Pharmacology Congress continues to the 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2012)

(See [www.pharmacol.co.za](http://www.pharmacol.co.za))

EVENT	Early bird registration	Late registration	CPD Points
Sat 29 <sup>th</sup> Sept: Pain Symposium	R500	R650	9 CPD & 4 Ethics
Sun 30 <sup>th</sup> Sept: Clinical Guidelines Symposium	R500	R650	4 CPD & 1 Ethics
Both symposia & first session of Congress (incl. refreshments / social function)	R900	R1300	17 CPD & 5 Ethics