

## FACT SHEET 2

# **SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL HEALTH AND NUTRITION EXAMINATION SURVEY (SANHANES)**

With the first South African National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (SANHANES), South Africa will be following in the footsteps of the US, China, Canada and countries in Europe where National Health and Nutrition Examination Surveys (NHANES) take place on a regular annual basis.

SANHANES aims to assess selected aspects of the health and nutritional status of the South African population. The information generated from the survey addresses or supports the National Department of Health's (NDOH) priority health indicators.

The study, of which the fieldwork survey will start in February 2012, will be conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) in conjunction with the National Department of Health (NDOH), the Medical Research Council (MRC), United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), and the Department for International Development (DFID) as well as the support from the Universities of the Free State, Limpopo, Mandela Metropolitan University, North West, Stellenbosch and Western Cape.

The implementation of SANHANES will greatly facilitate both the detection and tracking of the extent of current and emerging health priorities and the associated risk factors in the South African population. This data will provide key national and provincial information essential to the monitoring of diseases, health planning and subsequent health service delivery in future. SANHANES will yield recent information and trends for determining national standards for weight, height, and blood pressure. It will also help South Africa to determine the health literacy of the nation, information that is vital for planning disease prevention and health promotion intervention programmes. Data from this survey will be used in epidemiological studies and health sciences research, which will help develop sound public health policy, direct and design health programmes and services, and expand the health knowledge in the country.

The aims of the first SANHANES survey are:

- To evaluate the health status of South Africans with respect to the prevalence of non-communicable diseases (specifically cardiovascular disease, diabetes and hypertension) and their risk factors (diet, physical activity and tobacco use).
- To evaluate the knowledge, attitudes and behaviour of South Africans with respect to infectious diseases (such as tuberculosis).
- To evaluate the nutritional status of South Africans as an outcome of food security, dietary intake/behaviour, and body weight management.
- To evaluate South Africans' general perceptions of health and health care services.

- To evaluate the health status of children under the age of 5 years with respect to early childhood development, breastfeeding, care of illness, immunisation and the use of the road to health booklet.
- To evaluate the health status of children between 2-9 years with respect to physical and/or mental disabilities.
- To determine the socio-demographic status of South Africans in terms of household composition and amenities, level of education, employment status and socio-economic status, and relate these to the health and nutritional status of the South African population.

The survey will generate information on the prevalence of specific diseases, the social issues associated with the disease(s), nutritional status of South Africans as well as health promotion and disease prevention. The SANHANES will combine questionnaires with a free-of-charge clinical examination in mobile clinics and disease specific biomarkers, allowing health and nutrition to be explored in greater detail in order to better inform policy.

The survey is planned to be conducted annually, using a modular approach in order to continue addressing each of the NDOH priorities. In particular, the first SANHANES has identified five components which relate to the current NDOH's priorities, with exception of HIV/AIDS, which is covered by the population-based survey

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