

Challenges Faced by the Urban Black South Africans in the Prevention of Non-Communicable Diseases

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ABSTRACT This paper was conducted to describe some of the circumstances that increases the risk factors for non-communicable diseases amongst the previously disadvantaged South African population. The work presented here is based on an action research in an urban black township of Cape Town. The goal was to develop a Non-Communicable Disease model, which can be used to benefit an urban township community. Using a participatory process data was collected during each stage of the development and implementing interventions. Interviews, observations and situational assessment of resources available for promoting healthy lifestyle in the township were used to collect data. Although urbanisation seems to be a driving force in nutrition transition, there are underlying factors that influence lifestyle changes. These includes the environment in which people find themselves. The city provides variety of cheap unhealthy food at a lower price. Due to poverty and lack of knowledge, healthy foods become of less important. People tend to indulge in food rich in fat and sugars due to the belief that they have missed opportunities of enjoying these foods due to deprivation. This has lead to the increase in the prevalence of NCDs among poor South Africans. In conclusion, this work provided important information regarding the challenges faced by the urbanised poor population in South Africa. Although Khayelitsha was used to illustrate these challenges, the situation is similar to other urban townships of in South Africa.