



**WORLD
HEART
DAY** 29 SEP

WORLD HEART DAY: 2020

The Heart and Stroke Foundation South Africa calls to attention the burden of cardio-vascular disease (CVD) in the country, year-on-year during the month of September. Globally 17.7 million die from CVD and in South Africa an estimated 225 people die from heart disease, strokes and other circulatory diseases on a daily basis.

South Africa and indeed sub-Saharan Africa is a particular problem given that communicable diseases, like HIV, AIDS, and TB; and non-communicable diseases (NCDs) like CVD, which includes heart disease and strokes, diabetes, cancer and so on, have high rates of morbidity and mortality. Moreover, since March 2020, we have seen the direct and indirect impact of COVID-19 on both communicable and NCDs. There is sufficient evidence locally, regionally and globally, that demonstrates the poor health outcomes for individuals who are COVID-19 positive and have co-or-multi-morbidities. Hospitalized individuals who have the coronavirus SARS-COV2, and have CVD, diabetes, hypertension, HIV or AIDs have higher rates of mortality.

World Heart Day, as marked by the HSFSa is a culmination of four weeks, with each week focusing on a different but serious risk factor for CVD onset. Week 1 focused on Heart Disease, COVID-19 and other co-morbidities; Week 2 on Nutrition, Heart Health and Building Immunity; Week 3 on Alcohol Consumption, Tobacco Smoking and Associated Electronic Devices; and Week 4 on Health Care Workers, Allied and other Essential service workers.

Given that the Foundation is a member of the World Heart Federation, we are aligned to the theme driven by them, namely, ***“Use heart to beat Cardiovascular disease’, extending the theme to “use heart for you, your loved ones and all those who live in South Africa”.***

World Heart Day is observed on 29 September each year to increase awareness in the public about CVD, including their prevention and their global impact. World Heart Day was first celebrated in 1999. The World Heart Federation (WHF), joined hands with the World Health Organisation (WHO) and hence a global awareness day to spread information on heart health and is appreciated world over.

Prof Pamela Naidoo, CEO of the HSFSa states that: “The key risk factors that drive the high mortality and morbidity for CVD include modifiable and non-modifiable factors”. Non-modifiable factors include genetic make-up and predisposition for hypertension, increased cholesterol levels and other comorbid conditions, while modifiable factors include behavioural risk factors such as lack of physical activity, poor nutrition, tobacco smoking and increased alcohol consumption. In SA, the high rate of increased blood pressure or hypertension is very disturbing as studies indicate that almost 50% of adults are hypertensive. Hypertension is commonly called a “silent killer” due to the fact that oftentimes the symptoms go unnoticed. Of the 50% of South African adults living with hypertension only half of them actually know that they are. South Africans are also known to have a relatively high cumulative risk score for CVD onset due to the fact that there is a high prevalence of obesity, tobacco smoking, and physical inactivity in the country.

Given the burden of CVD in SA, Professor Pamela Naidoo, CEO of the HSFSa states: “by abiding by and adopting healthy behaviours and knowing your risk profile you will be able to prevent, to a large extent the risk of CVD onset. She continues to remind us that 80% of CVD is preventable through the adoption of healthy individual action”. In an on-line survey conducted by the Project Team Leader, Bianca Snyders at the HSFSa, we found that more than 60% of individuals are aware of what heart disease and strokes are and what the common risk factors are. Clearly, says Prof Naidoo awareness is insufficient as it is more important to take action and adapt our health behaviours.

The HSFSa urges all South Africans to have a Health Risk Assessment [HRA] (which includes checking their blood pressure, blood glucose, cholesterol levels, iron levels, weight and familial risk factors). The HSFSa will continue to conduct selected HRAs in community and workplace settings whenever possible. In addition, our long-standing partner, Dis-chem Pharmacies will be doing free HRAs during HAM and Stroke Week at all Dis-chem stores with in-house pharmacies until 3rd November. Prof Naidoo expresses her gratitude to Dis-chem Pharmacies for continuing to partner with the HSFSa to raise awareness of CVD and to mobilize communities to know their risk factors and encouraging community members to seek access to health care especially if medical treatment is required.

Professor Pamela Naidoo, CEO of the Foundation emphasizes that “we need to pay heed to our behaviours which can be either healthy or can be a barrier to better health outcomes and CVD prevention”. She continues to say that we should become empowered as individuals and work our way to “self-management” where possible. Make certain you know your blood pressure measure, be physically active, consume nutritious food, do not smoke tobacco, avoid indoor and outdoor air pollution and limit your alcohol consumption. The Foundation has highly skilled staff heading our key programmes. The CEO encourages you to utilize our newly launched **Health Chat Line** which allows you to contact our key staff if you have health queries associated with your heart and brain health, and associated risk factors. Do contact Hayley Cimring, our Nutrition Science Team Leader; Dana Govender, our Health Promotion Manager, and Shaylin Nundlal to discuss our Food Endorsement Programmes.

On WHD we urge all South Africans to **use their hearts to...make healthier choices and help prevent heart disease**. So, snap a picture of any of the below landmarks on Tuesday, 29 September and post them to your social media pages using the #USEHEART and #WorldHeartDay, as we drive the global goal of reducing premature deaths from CVD by 25% by the year 2025. It’s never too late to light up so please contact Sasha Forbes, our PR and Communications Team Leader for more information. We encourage all private and public sector organizations to observe World Heart Day. #WHD

Landmark	City
Life Flora Hospital	Florida
Life Rosepark Hospital	Bloemfontein
Life Mount Edgecombe Hospital	Durban
Life Carstenhof Hospital	Midrand
Life Wilgeheuwel Hospital	Roodekop
Life Entabeni Hospital	Durban
Life Westville Hospital	Durban
Life Eugene Marais Hospital	Pretoria
Life Roseacres Hospital	Germiston
Life Midmed Hospital	Middleburg, Mpumalanga
Life The Glynnwood	Benoni

Life Hilton Private Hospital	Midlands
Life Springs Parkland Hospital	Springs
Life Brenthurst Hospital	Johannesburg
Life Fourways Hospital	Fourways
Life Cosmos Hospital	Witbank, eMalahleni
Life Groenkloof Hospital	Pretoria
Life Vincent Pallotti Hospital	Cape Town
Life Kingsbury Hospital	Cape Town
PwC Office Building	Johannesburg

For updates on our World Heart Day activities, please visit our social media platforms and website www.heartfoundation.co.za or call 021-422 1586.

End

Interviews will be conducted with our CEO, Prof Pamela Naidoo, Health Promotion Officers, and relevant experts. To co-ordinate and confirm interview dates you are welcome to contact the Public Relations and Communications Department on 021 422 1586 or

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About the Heart and Stroke Foundation SA

The Heart and Stroke Foundation South Africa (HSFSA) plays a leading role in the fight against preventable heart disease and stroke, with the aim of seeing fewer people in South Africa suffer premature deaths and disabilities. The HSFSA, established in 1980 is a non-governmental, non-profit organization which relies on external funding to sustain the work it carries out.

The HSFSA aims to reduce the cardiovascular disease (CVD) burden in South Africa and ultimately on the health care system of South Africa. Our mission is to empower people in South Africa to adopt healthy lifestyles, make healthy choices easier, seek appropriate care and encourage prevention.

For more information visit www.heartfoundation.co.za. You can also find us on www.facebook.com/HeartStrokeSA and www.twitter.com/SAHeartStroke