

Poster Abstract – Original Research

Official Language: English

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Title of Presentation:

***Perceptions of adolescents from the Sterkspruit area South Africa, regarding factors that impact their right to adequate food***

- Brief description/abstract for the content of the poster presentation (**300 words max**).  
Introduction / Objectives / Methodology / Results / Conclusion

**Introduction**

If government fails to progressively realise obligations regarding social, economic and cultural human rights it could result in the violation of adolescents' human right to food, to the detriment of their development and well-being.

**Objectives**

This study aimed to gain insight into perceptions and experiences of adolescents in the Sterkspruit area (Eastern Cape Province) regarding the underlying factors that have an impact on their right to food.

### **Methodology**

A cross-sectional descriptive study using a mixed method approach was done in the Sterkspruit area of the Senqu sub-district (Eastern Cape province). In-depth interviews were conducted with eight key informants (KI). Fifty adolescents (32 female and 18 male ) aged 10 to 19 years completed a self-administered questionnaire and participated in focus group discussions (FGD), which were gender and age based. Through content analysis of qualitative data, data was coded and emerging themes were grouped, using the ATLAS.ti 7 text analysis programme.

### **Results**

Inappropriate utilisation of the child support grant (CSG), high unemployment rate, household poverty, punishing by withholding meals, low dietary diversity and risky behaviour had an adverse impact on the RtF. The National School Nutrition Programme and agricultural activities were regarded as factors contributing to food security. Yet, KIs regarded adolescents' lack of involvement in agricultural activities as a barrier to addressing food security even though urban adolescents had more access to agrarian resources. The government was regarded as the main duty-bearer responsible for the realisation of the RtF by increasing the CSG, improving employment possibilities, providing resources for agricultural activities and enhancing education. Few participants identified adolescents' responsibility as right-holders.

### **Conclusion**

The government is not efficient yet in taking sustainable measures to enhance food security. The implementation of a rights-based approach is needed for the duty-bearers and right-holders to facilitate the progressive realisation of the RtF of these adolescents.

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2. Please give two to three key references (published by you or others) which can be used to inform future work:

- **Marais ML.** Malnutrition in older persons: underestimated, underdiagnosed and undertreated. SA J Clin Nutr 2017; 30(2):4-6
- Realization of the right to adequate food and the nutritional status of land evictees: a case for mothers/caregivers and their children in rural Central Uganda. Nahalomo A, Iversen PO, Rukundo PM, Kaaya A, Kikafunda J, Eide WB, **Marais ML**, Wamala E, Kabahenda M. BMC Int

Health and Human Rights 2018;18:21 DOI: 10.1186/s12914-018-0162-6

- Du Plessis LM, Koornhof HE, **Marais ML**, Blaauw R. Implementation of the Road-to-Health-Booklet health promotion messages at primary health care facilities, Western Cape Province, South Africa. S Afr J Child Health 2017;11(4):164-169. DOI:10.7196/SAJCH.2017.v11i4.1414

3. Please identify, where possible, up to three specific key messages that participants will take away from your poster presentation to inform their future practice.

Working as a health care professional, the researcher noticed the lack of available data related to nutrition status and food security of the community, especially concerning adolescents. This research provide this neglected group with a voice.

- 1) There is a need for research addressing perceptions regarding possible factors that impact adolescents' right to adequate food in other population groups, including the population living in urban and peri-urban settings, with different socio demographic circumstances.
- 2) Furthermore, an investigation is necessary whether duty bearers at government level have met their obligation towards the progressive realisation of the right to food of especially adolescents as well as all other relevant rights
- 3) The simple fact that poverty, food insecurity and the high unemployment rate still exist as well as the fact that female adolescents need to engage in transactional sex in exchange for food, is an indication that not all humans have physical or economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food.<sup>49</sup> The implementation of the rights-based approach by government, ensuring the monitoring of implementation by using human rights principles when addressing food security, can facilitate the progressive realization of the right to food by the South African government as well as the adolescents and other rights-holders.