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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



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## Research Fellows and Research Projects

Department of Science and Technology (DST) – National Research Foundation (NRF) Centre in  
Indigenous Knowledge Systems (CIKS)

### RESEARCH FOCUS AREA: FOOD SECURITY

Researcher in action



Community engagement



**Full Name:** Phumzile Dandala

**Country of Research:** Msunduzi Municipality, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa

**Research Topic:** Nutrition Transition Effects on People's Food Choices and Preferences: A case of African women in the Msunduzi Municipality, Pietermaritzburg.

**Institutional Affiliation:** University of KwaZulu Natal

**Research Supervisor:** Professor Unathi Kolanisi

### Research Background

Overweight and obesity prevalence among black South African women have reached epidemic proportions. The World Health Organisation (WHO) (2011) cautioned about this, as 56% adult black African females are either overweight or obese in South Africa ( Shisana, Labadarios, Rehle, Simbayi, Zuma, Dhansay, Reddy, Parker, Hoosain, Naidoo, Hongoro,

Mchiza, Steyn, Dwane, Makoe, Maluleke, Ramlagan, Zungu, Evans, Jacobs, Faber, 2013)  
There problem is the strong association of obesity with chronic nutrition-related non-communicable diseases (NR-NCDs), especially type-2 diabetes, stroke, hypertension, cardiovascular diseases and some cancers, the key causes of death globally.

Numerous studies (WHO, 2011; Popkin, 2002; Vorster, 2002) illustrate that high-energy-dense food consumption is one of the main risk factors for obesity. High-energy-dense foods are highly refined grains, added sugars and fats, highly palatable, with diminished satiation, resulting in 'passive overconsumption' (Drewnowski Specter, 2004).

As nutrition transition sets in, people move away from rural to urban areas, lose ability to grow food using indigenous ways, then turn to cash markets. The globalisation of food markets results in mass produced food through powerful advertising of low-cost, energy dense, and nutrient poor foods, greatly increasing the proportion of fat calories in diets (Caballero, 2005). This scenario aggravates the current obesity pandemic.

**Email:** [phumzile@cdtrust.co.za](mailto:phumzile@cdtrust.co.za)