

SA'S MALNUTRITION PROBLEM GROWING

Our Obesity statistics on par with US

SOUTH Africa is sitting on a malnutrition time bomb – with people either severely over- or underweight, top nutrition expert Demetre Labadarios has warned.

Speaking at the launch of the Human Sciences Research Council's (HSRC) Centre for the Study of the Social and Environmental Determinants of Nutrition, he said statistics showed that globally 112 million children were underweight and that under-nutrition was the underlying cause of one-third of all child deaths.

Labadarios, who will head up the centre, also quoted statistics which showed that SA's overweight and obesity statistics were on par with those of the United States.

But what made SA unique was the similarly high levels of stunting which pointed towards the massive inequality in the country.

He warned that dealing with food issues alone was not effective. Dealing with underlying social and environmental factors was critical.

It is hoped the centre will identify underlying causes of under-nutrition or chronic lifestyle diseases such as obesity, diabetes and high blood pressure, and develop approaches to better understand mechanisms that link social factors to nutrition.

Speaking in Cape Town on Monday, Health Minister Aaron Motsoaledi said he looked forward to research to



OBESE: South African Earnalene Digjue is 39 years old.

PHOTO: MBUZENI ZULU

help the government craft more focused, custom-designed policy interventions.

He said research showed obesity was highest in black women and white men.

He said understanding the social and environmental factors of nutrition was crucial as that was where the government could intervene to change behaviour in food purchase and preparation.

To understand the co-existence of over- and under-nutrition in food secure households, a road map for nutrition and food security coordinated by the HSRC was needed. – *Health-e news*



HEFTY: Michael Hebranko, 43, had to be removed from his New York apartment by rescue workers.



UNDERNOURISHED: Zandile, 4, and Siphwe, 6, Mngomezulu of Alexandra, close to wealthy Sandton.



CONFINED: This woman's weight makes her a virtual prisoner in her bedroom.

