

### 3<sup>rd</sup> BRICSCESS 2024-New Delhi Invited Speaker



Assoc. Prof. Dr. Maya van Gent  
Human Movement Science Department  
Faculty of Health Sciences  
University of Fort Hare  
South Africa

**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Maya van Gent** is currently a lecturer in Human Movement Science Programme in the Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Fort Hare, South Africa. Prof van Gent obtained her Doctor of Philosophy in Human Movement Science in 2003 from the North-West University. She has obtained several national research grants, the most recent one was awarded by the South African Medical Research Council for a research project titled "The development of an intervention to combat the physical and psychological risk factors associated with non-communicable diseases among adolescents in the Eastern Cape, South Africa and its potential impact". She has been a visiting scholar to Worcester University, England and to Gdansk University, Poland. Her research interest include anthropometrics, and the role that physical activity and mental health plays in promoting healthy living in various populations. She has been involved in policy brief with regards to the sport participation guidelines during COVID-19 and is on the HAKSA (Healthy Active Kids South Africa) writing team. She has been invited speaker to various international conference and has published her research in international peer-reviewed journals.

#### **Influence of a Physical Activity and Psychosocial Intervention on Risk Factors Associated with NCD among Adolescents**

Concerns pertaining to physical, physiological and psychological health and risk factors associated with non-communicable diseases (NCDs) among adolescents have been prioritised in the agendas of international health institutions throughout the world. The necessity for living healthy lives and maintaining healthy lifestyles is often neglected in many countries, particularly in many low-income countries. Another aspect to consider is also the mental health and well-being of adolescents, as adolescents account for 16% of reports of instances of mental illness throughout the world. It has been estimated that from 10 to 20% of adolescents develop mental health problems, with more than half of the instances of mental disorders throughout the world affecting adolescents as young as 14 years of age. The global population includes approximately 1.2 billion adolescents or young people and in South Africa, adolescents comprise 39% of the overall population, unfortunately some undesirable forms of behaviour, such as physical inactivity, poor diet, become ingrained during

adolescence. Thus, adolescents are an ideal time to promote physical and mental health behaviour. This presentation will firstly report the prevalence of physical, physiological and psychological risk factors that are associated with NCDs among adolescents in the poorest province of South Africa. An overview of the physical activity and psychosocial intervention will be provided with reporting of the post-test and retest results. The presentation will also report associations between various factors that possibly predict NCD among adolescents and conclude with suggestions to reduce the risk factors among adolescents.