Units of alcohol in South Africa

In Chapter 8 of the *Handbook of Family Medicine*¹ (third edition), with reference to alcohol use disorders, it is implied that, in South Africa, one unit of alcohol is 10 g of alcohol. The definition of a standard drink varies between countries.² While there seems to be no legal definition for the size of a standard drink in South Africa, it is accepted that one unit is 12 g alcohol, while the guidelines for safe consumption per week are 21 units for men and 14 units for women.³ Furthermore, in the calculation of the number of grams of alcohol in alcoholic beverages, no allowance is made for the density of ethanol (0.79 g/ml at room temperature).⁴ Thus, in the example given, if Peter drinks seven beers (375 ml) with 5% alcohol content and two bottles (750 ml) of red wine per week, he actually consumes 270 g in one week (7 × 375 × 0.05 × 0.79 = 103.7 g plus 750 × 2 × 0.14 × 0.79 = 165.9 g); and not 341 g. At 12 g per unit, he is only 18 g over his safe limit of 21 units or 252 g. According to the handbook calculation, he is 131 g over the limit. We can give Peter the benefit of the correction and not be killjoys!

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References


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**7TH ANNUAL PAIN SYMPOSIUM**
University of Pretoria, Endorsed by Pain SA

**Saturday, 29th September 2012 (8:00-17:00)**
Sanlam Auditorium, Main Campus – University of Pretoria

- Introduction and overview: Prof Helgard Meyer
- Pharmacotherapy for chronic pain: Dr Kim Outhoff
- Dysmenorrhoea: Prof Leon Snyman
- Common running injuries: Dr Christa J van Rensburg
- Chronic low back pain: Dr Jacques Glaud
- Behavioural therapy in chronic pain: Ms Bev Bolton
- Chronic pelvic pain: Prof Gerhard Lindeque
- Interventions for chronic pain, Do they work?: Dr Milton Raff
- Abuse of codeine combination analgesics: Dr Gerhard Grobler
- When is a headache dangerous?: Dr Johan Smuts
- The role of diet in inflammatory pain disorders: Dr Nelly Silvis
- HIV related pain disorders: Prof Peter Kamerman
- Opioids in cancer pain – clinical/ethical issues: Dr Liz Gwyther
- Adverse effects of NSAIDs: Dr Jacques Snyman

**17:30 – Short Dinner Symposium: National Health Insurance**
Adv Elsabe Klinck

**18:15 - Social function:** Big screen rugby test and “spitbraai”

Any enquiries, full programme and registration form, please contact:
Doris at (012) 373-1096 (email: doris.bosch@up.ac.za)
or Sanet at (012) 373-1018/9 (email: sanet.cloete@up.ac.za)

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**7TH ANNUAL PAIN SYMPOSIUM**
University of Pretoria, Endorsed by Pain SA

**Current Guidelines Symposium: 10 Major Clinical Disorders**
Sunday, 30th September 2012 (8:00-13:00)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cardiovascular risk factors – current evidence</td>
<td>Prof James Ker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guidelines for prevention and early detection of cervical cancer</td>
<td>Prof Gerhard Lindeque</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diabetes Mellitus – current guidelines for diagnosis and treatment</td>
<td>Prof Paul Rheeder</td>
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<tr>
<td>Osteo-arthritis – current perspectives</td>
<td>Prof Mahmood Ally</td>
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<td>Fibromyalgia</td>
<td>Prof Gerhard Meyer</td>
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<td>Asthma and allergy in children</td>
<td>Prof Robin Green</td>
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<td>New South African neuropathic pain guidelines</td>
<td>Dr Milton Raff</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIV / AIDS and tuberculosis – the reality in 2012</td>
<td>Prof Lynne Webber</td>
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<td>Maternal mortality – a major epidemic in SA</td>
<td>Prof Bob Pattinson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Initial management of a seriously injured patient</td>
<td>Prof Dries Engelbrecht</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrating care and quality improvement – ethical perspectives</td>
<td>Prof Jannie Hugo</td>
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</tbody>
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Followed by first session:

**SA National Pharmacology Congress Mini symposium: Obesity in 2012** (13:30-15:30)
(Pharmacology Congress continues to the 2nd October 2012)
(See www.pharmacol.co.za)

**EVENT** | **Early bird registration** | **Late registration** | **CPD Points**
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sat 29th Sept: Pain Symposium</td>
<td>R500</td>
<td>R650</td>
<td>9 CPD &amp; 4 Ethics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun 30th Sept: Clinical Guidelines Symposium</td>
<td>R500</td>
<td>R650</td>
<td>4 CPD &amp; 1 Ethics</td>
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<td>Both symposia &amp; 1st session of Congress (incl. refreshments / social function)</td>
<td>R800</td>
<td>R1300</td>
<td>17 CPD &amp; 5 Ethics</td>
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