

# The ongoing monitoring and surveillance of chronic disease and risk factors in South Australia

**T**he South Australian Monitoring and Surveillance System (SAMSS) has been in operation since July 2002. Approximately 600 interviews are conducted each month, by telephone, of a random representative sample of the South Australian population of all ages. Chronic conditions, risk factors and other health priority areas are examined. Demographic information is also collected. Uses of SAMSS include monitoring the prevalence of chronic conditions at both a point in time and over time. However, while for some chronic conditions, the prevalence may not be changing rapidly over a period of time, when examined in relation to other data items such as income, work status, age or sex differences in trends are observed. This presentation discusses the prevalence of chronic conditions and risk factors and highlights differences that become evident when data are examined in different ways and using different subpopulations. Examples will highlight the importance of aspects of a surveillance system, in particular the interpretation and dissemination of results, and translation of information into action.

**Tiffany Gill, Anne Taylor**