
SA crime increases teen blood pressure — study

JOHANNESBURG — Crime in South Africa impacts on blood pressure in adolescents, a Wits University study has found.

High adolescent blood pressure could in turn lead to a stroke or cardiovascular diseases in adulthood, according to the research programme, entitled “Birth to Twenty”, nicknamed “Mandela’s Children”.

It is the largest and longest-running study of child and adolescent health and development in Africa.

Crime, sanitation and household assets have an impact on systolic blood pressure of South African adolescents, said Wits professor John

Pettifor, one of the researchers.

Pettifor said crime levels could make healthy lifestyle behaviour, like physical activity, more difficult, which could affect blood pressure.

The study found adolescents in poorer households are at greater risk of high blood pressure than those in wealthier communities. This shows that the environment babies are born into has long-term health implications.

In 1990, 3 273 children in Johannesburg were enrolled in the “Birth to Twenty” programme, to be followed and interviewed over 20 years. — Sapa.