



**PSRH leaders and partners gathered in Lautoka, Fiji (24–26 July 2025), to advance regional priorities, refine governance, and prepare for the 2026 Biennial Conference. The meeting set a clear direction for strengthening partnerships and reproductive health initiatives across the Pacific.**

Pacific Society for Reproductive Health (PSRH) Board met face-to-face at the in Lautoka, Fiji, for three days of planning and collaboration. The meeting brought together PSRH Board Trustees, Secretariat members, and development partners—UNFPA, WHO, and SPC—with additional participation from subcommittee chairs and country coordinators joining online.



**Top Left:** Dr Ulai Tapa Fidow, Dr Silina Motofaga, Tagiyaco Vakaloloma, Dr Brian Guevara, RM Litiana Tatukivei, Prof Rajat Gyaneshwar, Dr Amanda Noovao Hill, Dr Dyxon Hansell, **Second row:** Prof Kirsten Black, Dr Rebecca Mitchell, Dr Nancy Hamura, Dr Karaponi Okesene-Gafa, Dr Titilola Duro-Aina, Dr Nanise Sikiti, Prof Deborah Bateson, Dr Litia Narube, Dr Falahola Fuka,

The Board reviewed financial reports, endorsed strategic priorities for 2025–2030, and confirmed plans for the 2026 PSRH Biennial Conference in Tonga. Key discussions highlighted the expansion of PEMNeT emergency obstetric training, gynaecological oncology initiatives, family planning, and midwifery leadership programmes.

**PSRH Board Members**



Governance and sustainability were central themes. The Board advanced plans to strengthen governance processes, succession planning, and Secretariat operations, including recruiting two new staff members in Fiji. Website upgrades and increased member engagement were also prioritized to enhance PSRH’s digital presence and outreach. The meeting closed with clear action points to advance partnerships, workforce training, and digital platforms, reaffirming PSRH’s commitment to building a skilled and connected reproductive health workforce across the Pacific.

**PSRH Board Members**  
**Top Left:** Prof Deborah Bateson, (Treasurer), Dr Rebecca Mitchell, (RANZCOG Rep), Dr Nanise Sikiti, Dr Karaponi Okesene-Gafa, (Immediate Past President), Dr Falahola Fuka, (Secretary) **Lower Right:** Dr Amanda Noovao Hill, (Vice President Medical, Head of Secretariat), Dr Ulai Tapa Fidow, (President), RM Litiana Tatukivei, (Vice President Midwifery), Dr Nancy Hamura.



# PROFILE



## DR. BRIAN GUEVARA PSRH American Samoa Country Coordinator

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My journey in Obstetrics and Gynecology began in 2011. Trained in Fiji, where I also earned a Masters in Medicine in Obstetrics & Gynecology, I gained experience at CWM, Labasa, and Lautoka hospitals. Now, I contribute to the health of American Samoa at LBJ Tropical Medical Center. I have a particular interest in ultrasonography and laparoscopic surgery, and I actively promote family planning within reproductive health.

I hope to make doctors in American Samoa more aware of the role and value of PSRH and help promote their programs on the island. Reproductive health goes a long way to improving the quality of life for the population of any Pacific nation.

We invite professionals from other Pacific Islands and PSRH members to consider working and collaborating with us in American Samoa. We would be pleased to host research projects and workshops. Being part of PSRH is a privilege, particularly for the access it affords to CMEs and conferences.

American Samoa, like many of its Pacific Island neighbors, encounters health challenges such as high incidences of non-communicable diseases in reproductive-age women, unplanned pregnancies in women with multiple prior births, and adolescent pregnancies. Professional and Sexual Reproductive Health (PSRH) programs, such as PEMNET and ongoing CMEs for obstetrics and gynecology clinicians, offer a pathway to address these concerns with greater consistency.

Our prenatal clinic has a patient waiting area. Highlights from our Ob-gyn clinic include the 2024 introduction of prenatal classes (breastfeeding, nutrition, physiotherapy) and educational videos for the waiting area, where I assisted the unit chief. This year, I was pivotal in implementing RSV vaccination for pregnant individuals in American Samoa. Despite annual challenges, I appreciate being part of our Ob-gyn unit's teamwork in tackling them.



# World Breastfeeding Month

World Breastfeeding Week  
(1–7 August)

*“Invest in breastfeeding,  
invest in the future”*

This month, we explore how investing in breastfeeding also means investing in the broader wellbeing of mothers and babies—including often-overlooked aspects like oral health. Maternal dental health can influence infant oral development and early feeding experiences. In this edition, we feature an article highlighting how maternal oral care during pregnancy plays a critical role in shaping child health outcomes. Join us for the *“Infant Feeding: Magical Mysteries and Myths,”* **Thursday 21st August** to unpack the science, stories, and cultural insights that influence breastfeeding practices across the Pacific.



## World Breastfeeding Month



**PACIFIC**  
SOCIETY FOR REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Join Carole Dobrich RN IBCLC  
& Dale Hansson RN IBCLC

**Webinar: Infant Feeding: Magical  
Mysteries and Myths**



**Thursday  
21st  
August  
2025**

5pm AU (AEST)  
5pm Port Moresby  
6pm Vanuatu &  
Solomon Islands  
7pm Auckland & Fiji  
8pm Tonga & Samoa

**Click to register**

Webinar is FREE to attend but registration is ESSENTIAL

# MATERNAL & CHILD ORAL HEALTH

## Dr Seema Kumar | Dental Specialist

Maternal oral health has a significant impact on future dental caries among children. Due to vertical transmission of the cariogenic bacteria from untreated dental caries in pregnant women, young children are put at higher risk for dental caries if their mother's oral health is compromised. Some studies have shown a positive association between periodontal disease during pregnancy and adverse birth outcomes, such as low birth weight and preterm birth, and others have mixed views. However, the lack of evidence does not indicate a lack of effect. Preterm birth and a history of neonatal intubation (a proxy for poor neonatal health), poor maternal nutrition and exposure to infections do increase the risk of Dental Defects (DDE) in the primary dentition. Several studies have demonstrated the relationship between a mother's oral health knowledge and its influence on children's oral health through diet and home oral hygiene care. However, the challenge still exists for many pregnant women and mothers who fail to seek timely dental care due to demographic, socioeconomic, psychological, and behavioural factors.





**Continued:**

The World Health Organisation (WHO) recently stated that women are change agents in families and communities, promoting dialogue, catalysing societal change, and addressing oral diseases and health equity. As a result, maternal and child health offers the ideal framework to integrate oral health into prenatal and primary care and adopt a collaborative approach to addressing the risks of obesity and Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in the Pacific Island Countries (PICs). A maternal and child oral health integrated program has been developed and delivered in the Cook Islands as part of the Healthy Cook Islands 2030+ flagship program.



Insights and experiences from this program will be shared in this series. The primary elements highlighted for a proposed framework include contextual factors, intervention levels, and enabling factors. Oral health should be considered an integrated part of the health care system in care delivery, access to care, financing, and health literacy throughout women’s life cycle. Moreover, policymakers should examine how oral health and health care can be systematically integrated into the existing health care system through universal coverage for primary oral health care and inter-professional training and collaboration. This framework can initiate maternal and child oral health dialogues and initiatives to improve oral health and the overall health of the mother and child.

**References**

*Are available by contacting PSRH at [volunteerkj@psrh.org.nz](mailto:volunteerkj@psrh.org.nz)*

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*Thank you!*

The PSRH Board gratefully acknowledges the generous donation of books from Professor Cindy Farquhar from the University of Auckland.

These books have been distributed by the Board to support knowledge-sharing among PSRH members across the region.

*Thank you!*





# PSRH MEMBERSHIP

Your membership will help support important PSRH initiatives:

- Pacific Emergency Maternal & Neonatal Training
- Family Planning
- Gynaecology Oncology
- Midwifery Leadership
- Clinical Governance, MPDSR and much more!



## WHY JOIN OR RENEW?

- ✓ Access to the Members lounge
- ✓ Access to scholarships opportunities
- ✓ Monthly FREE Webinars
- ✓ Monthly e-Newsletter with resources & clinical information
- ✓ Assist in advancing and advocating for reproductive health initiatives in the Pacific

## HOW TO JOIN OR RENEW

- **Already a member and need to renew or are you a new member?**  
Go to the 'Signup' area on the PSRH website by using the QR code above or clicking on this **LINK**. Use your email address as username and sign up for this years membership.

*Membership is 1st April to 31st March each year*



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*Thank You*

*To RM Logomai Feterika Lualua for sharing her knowledge skills and expertise at the July PSRH webinar. Thank you to PSRH VP-Midwifery RM Litiana Tatukivei for hosting this insightful session.*



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