

PSRH Newsletter

Pacific Society for Reproductive Health (PSRH)



ISSN: 2253-4431 (Print) 2253-444X (Online), Vol. 3, Issue 1

Special 25th Birthday Issue

EDITORIAL



Alec Ekeroma

We close the year with celebrations. It is the season of graduations and awards. It is also the season for giving and reflections on the ebbs and flows. PSRH is 25 years old and there is much to celebrate. From a small lecture room in the Colonial

War Memorial Hospital (CWMH) in Suva to the influential and accomplished Society it is today – delivering continuous professional development opportunities across member states in the Pacific region. We were in Suva last August delivering eight workshops attended by more than 200 doctors, nurses and midwives from Fiji and five other Pacific countries - and yet we failed to bake a birthday cake or open a bottle of champagne. We were too busy attending to our core business – delivering workshops that address continuous professional development for our members. Therefore, we would like to dedicate this newsletter to our 25th birthday. It is not too late to celebrate our successes and to highlight our major achievements during our journey. There is a Maori saying: *Kāore te kumara e kōrero ana mo tōna ake reka*. Translated: “the kumara does not brag about its own sweetness.” The whakatauki (proverb) places value in humility. But Maori also understand that the journey is usually not plain sailing and therefore celebration of every and all achievements is valuing reflection on what has gone well, inspiring the team to do better and encouraging aspirations for the moon and the stars. We are all about sweetness.

In our 25-year journey, some of our founders and dedicated members have left this world or our ship. We owe them gratitude and memories of their work will hopefully, grace the pages of this special issue. I have decided to let the photos tell the stories. Stories underpinned by dedication and commitment to a cause.

The photos and selected stories from previous newsletters are in chronological order.

They are from the PSRH archives in the Secretariat which are more complete since the Secretariat moved to Auckland in 2006.

It will be remiss of me not to mention the most important birthday later this month. We wish all our readers and members a happy, safe and restful Christmas and holidays with your loved ones.



The Pacific Journal of Reproductive Health is published twice a year and we welcome all manuscripts in reproductive health. We aim to publish online within a fortnight of a manuscript being accepted.

1993-1999



Legend has it that a meeting funded by AusAid and organised by the Fiji School of Medicine (FSM) and the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (RANZCOG) resulted in a belief that working together would provide strength and a platform from which to build supportive networks across the range of reproductive health providers in the Pacific and Pacific-rim countries. The initiative was nurtured at RANZCOG by Mrs Carmel Walker. Drs Rajat Gyaneshwar, Wame Baravilala and the late A/Prof Brian Spurrett, which led to the inaugural meeting of the Society in 1995 in Vanuatu funded largely by AusAid.

The 2nd PSRH conference in 1997 was held in Apia, Samoa (photo) and the 3rd conference was held in Suva Fiji in 1999. In the early days, the number of overseas delegates were 10-20 and the meetings were designed to provide educational opportunities for local participants.



The PSRH Secretariat was relocated in 1999 to the office of the Dean of the Fiji School of Medicine, Dr Wame Baravilala, who was the first Secretary-General.

2000-2002

4th PSRH Conference 2001, Madang, Papua New Guinea

The late A/Prof Aldo Vacca loved teaching on how to perform a vacuum extraction delivery correctly to minimise failure and trauma. He founded the



Kiwi cup which is widely used in some countries. This followed the creation of the Bird posterior cup was also developed in PNG by the late Dr Geoffrey Bird.

The idea of a Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and Associate Membership of RANZCOG for Pacific O&G specialist was floated

by Dr Ekeroma at the meeting. Dr Rajat Gyaneshwar delivered the Brian Spurrett oration.

2003-2005

5th PSRH Conference, Nadi, Fiji 2003.



Participants at conference



Participants of small discussion groups. Clearly identified in the above two pics are: Dr Tupou Wata, Dr James Fong, Dr Swaran Naidu, Dr Pushpa Nusair, Dr Francis Maru, Dr Bethel Muasau, Dr Mary Birdsall, Dr John Wilson, Dr Henry Tikaka.

The Brian Spurrett Oration was delivered by Dr Mary Schramm. The Brian Spurrett Foundation Fellowships were advertised.

PSRH Executive – Wame Baravilala, Rufina Latu, James Fong, Sala Matiava, Kinga Czerwonka, Georgina Garap, Alec Ekeroma.



6th PSRH Conference 2005, Nadi, Fiji

The conference theme: *Advancing Reproductive Health in the Pacific: responding to challenges and needs*. The 86 delegates discussed topics that include Safe Motherhood and Maternity Care, Adolescent Reproductive Health and HIV / AIDS and a PSRH Workplan to support reproductive health. The Brian Spurrett Oration was delivered by Mrs Kerry Spurrett.



A urogynaecology workshop was utilised as a pre-meeting workshop for local Fijian O&G specialists and six O&G specialists from other Pacific island countries. The facilitators for the urogynaecology workshop in Suva were Professor Judith Goh, and Dr Hannah Krause.



The development of the Pacific specialists CPD programme and Associate Membership in conjunction with RANZCOG was in full swing.



Vol 1, Iss 1, Alec Ekeroma: *It has been exciting journey getting the Journal thus far and I am optimistic that researchers and clinicians in the Pacific Islands and Pacific-rim countries will share in the excitement and the journey that lies ahead.- The Ocean-Blue Journal is born.*

2006-2007



PSRH Newsletter Issue 6: Nov 2006

Integrating Sexual & Reproductive Health Into Maternal & Child Health

Glen Mola, 2006

Every married man needs to know how long he can stay 'happy' without having sex, and every wife needs to know how long her husband can abstain and still remain 'sensible'. But whatever these periods of time are, there are two things that can make a man behave atypically, - alcohol and travel away from home. Wives should understand this. After all, it is only by understanding each other that a marriage becomes a true partnership.

RANZCOG/PSRH Emergency Obstetrics Course Development Plan for Pacific Island Countries

James Fong, 2006

Current plans are therefore focused on developing draft recommendations on developing an EmOC course for PICs by Dr James Fong. These recommendations will be discussed in a meeting at RANZCOG College house in Melbourne. It is hoped that a number of people who have been involved in developing EmOC programs in the Pacific will be able to attend including Dr. Alec Ekeroma, Professor Glen Mola, Dr. Miriam O'Conner, Dr. Wame Baravilala (also representing UNFPA), representatives of RANZCOG and other relevant parties. The objective will be to discuss and develop an EmOC course suitable for rolling out in PICs. Funding for conducting the EmOC courses will also be discussed.

HIV/AIDS In The South Pacific

Alumita Bulicokocoko, 2006

Despite the difficulty of finding funding to attend a workshop on strengthening nursing and midwifery in managing HIV/AIDS in the South Pacific, twenty eight nurses and midwives from 10 Pacific Island countries attended a 3 day workshop in Apia Samoa, 30th August - 1st September 2006. The workshop was coordinated by the South Pacific Nurses Forum (SPNF) and the Commonwealth Nurses Federation (CNF).

The Secretariat Relocates To Auckland

The Pacific Medical Association Conference in Auckland on 25th August 2006 was an excellent opportunity for both the launch of the **Pacific Women's Health Research and Development Unit**

(PWHRDU) in New Zealand and the formal handover of the Pacific Society of Reproductive Health Secretariat to the Unit in the presence of



Prof. Iain Martin, Dr Peter White and Dr Alec Ekeroma

200 Pacific Health Workers from around the Pacific and from within New Zealand. The President of the Pacific Society of Reproductive Health, Dr Rufina Latu, officiated at the handover ceremony which was attended by representatives of the University of Auckland, Counties Manukau District Health Board and the Royal Australian & New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. Rufina spoke of the historical work of the Pacific Society of Reproductive Health in developing and supporting the reproductive health work force in the Pacific, improving women's health by improving processes and systems in collaboration with health teams and leaders from the various Pacific Island nations and also in collaborative effort with the College in achieving its goals.

At the Pasifika Medical Association (PMA) conference dinner at the same event, Dr Alec



Attendees for the Pacific Women's Health Research & Development Unit Launch

Ekeroma who was a former president, founder and Head of the PWHRDU, was presented the award by PMA of Excellence Service for Pacific People.

Leah Cowley, Alec Ekeroma, Tracy Ekeroma, Peri Ekeroma, Carmel Walker



7th PSRH Conference 2007, Apia, Samoa



7th Biennial Scientific Meeting of the Pacific Society for Reproductive Health
11 - 14 September, 2007 Apia, Samoa



The NZ College of Midwives and the Australian College of Midwives were full engaged from this conference .

Dr John Wilson, A/Prof Rajat Gyaneshwar, Roger Gabb Prof Roger Gabb, Education Manager at RANZCOG delivered the Brian Spurrett Oration. John Wilson has never missed a PSRH conference since 2001.



Sr Sulueti Duvaga (middle) with the other participants at conference.



The late Dr Semisi Latu from Tonga with other participants. Semisi was the senior specialist in Tonga for many years and contributed extensively to many PSRH initiatives.

Dr Pushpa Nusair, Dr Rufna Latu and Sr Sulueti Duvaga



AOFOG Council 2002-2008



Dr Alec Ekeroma was a member of the Asia Oceania Federation of Obstetrics and

Gynaecology Council for 4 years and A/Prof Rajat Gyaneshwar was advisor the Secretary General. PSRH has received some educational assistance from AOFOG

2008-2009



8th PSRH Conference 2009, Auckland, NZ



The conference had seen an increase in the number of participants and there was huge support from Pacific health provider organisations in Auckland.



Dr Peter Whyte and Dr Roy Watson facilitating a PSRH strategy meeting at the conference.

The Brian Spurrett Oration was delivered by Dr Ken Clark: *"Is it too much to hope in our corner of the world for a greater sense of region, regional pride, and regional responsibility, based on the principles of partnership and respect?"*



Participants of the first PSRH Research Workshop



Mrs Kerry Spurrett (2nd from left) is a guest of honour at all PSRH conferences. Others are from l-r, Dr John Ah Ching (PSRH President), Dr Ken Clarke, Dr Dorothy Shaw (FIGO President), Dr Ted Weaver (RANZCOG President), Prof Pat Brodie (ACM President), Ms Karen Gulliland (NZCOM CEO), Dr Rajat Gyaneshwar. Picture taken by Alec Ekeroma.



Brian Spurrett Foundation Fellowships sponsored midwives to Middlemore Hospital. Pictured were the two recipients in 2008 from Samoa and the Solomon Islands. Pictured also are: Thelma Thompson, Director of Midwifery and the two former Executive Officers of PSRH, Naita Puniani (2006-2009) and Yvonne Kainuku-Walsh (2009-2011).

PSRH is a recognised workforce capacity builder in reproductive health and an advocate for women's health in the Pacific. Partnering with RANZCOG, we presented a submission to the NZPPD who were conducting an enquiry into maternal health in the region. In our joint submission, we recommended:

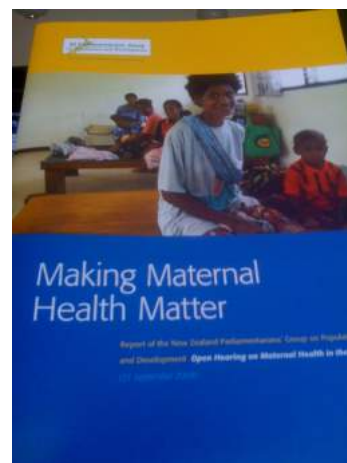
- NZ use its influence in the region to support health sector reforms, governance and leadership training and improved funding for maternal health services.

Picture (l-r): Alec Ekeroma (PSRH President), Dr Jackie Blue (Chair, NZ



Parliamentary Group on Population and Development, NZPPD), Ms Yvonne Kainuku-Walsh (PSRH EO), Dr Peter White (RANZCOG CEO).

- Prioritised funding for projects that contribute directly to a reduction in maternal and infant morbidity and mortality, improve



reproductive health outcomes and increase in the utilisation of family planning services.

- Workforce development – the Pacific, especially PNG, needs more midwives.
- An increase in research and audit activities – data is needed to inform service delivery and health policies.

NZ Councillors of RANZCOG. Dr Alec Ekeroma is the first Pacific person to be elected on to the Council of an Australasian professional body.

Lobbying for the Pacific from within.



4. Increase Reproductive Health Research
5. Increase Professional Development & Capacity Building

Prof Ian Rouse delivered the Brian Spurrett Oration: 'Something Old, New, Borrowed and Blue'.



Some of the participants at the conference: Rufina Latu, Wame Baravilala, John Ah Ching, Gunzee Garwin, Alec Ekeroma.

2010-2011



9th PSRH Conference 2011, Honiara, Solomon Islands



PSRH
Date: 5th to 8th July 2011, Solomon Islands

We had to limit the number of attendees as there was standing room only at the Mendana Hotel. There was intense interest from midwives and nurses across all nine provinces of the Solomon Islands.

At the 2011 conference in Honiara, the following action plans were adopted.

PSRH ACTION PLANS, 2011-2013

1. Improve Maternal Health – Reducing Maternal Mortality & Morbidity
2. Integrate HIV-STI into Reproductive Health Programs
3. Increase awareness and improvement action in Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health



The Solomon Islands midwives were engaged in the dialogue.



Dr John Ah Ching, Ms Sumi Subramanam (Family Planning International), Dr Jackie Blue and Ms Yvonne Kainuku-Walsh (PSRH EO).



Pic (l-r): Dr Alec Ekeroma, Ms Fika Vucago (NZ sonographer), Dr Leeanne Panisi (Head of O&G, Solomon Islands). One of the benefits of PSRH meetings is that most of the machinery and consumables taken across for training are left in country.

Ultrasound Scan Training, Fiji



Prof Peter Stone has been the lead facilitator of PSRH USS workshops in the Pacific. The picture is a workshop in Suva (front l-r): Prof Ian Rouse, Jenny Mitchell and Dr James Fong). The postgraduate trainees in the Masters of O&G programme fully utilise these opportunities.



And then we have Glence Faka (from Good Samaritan Hospital in Gaudalcanal Province) and Ellery Hivu Nagu (from National Referral Hospital in Honiara) attend their attachment in Middlemore Hospital. They spent time in Maternity Ward, Assessment, Labour and Birthing Unit, Community Midwifery, the Diabetes and Obstetrics Medical Clinics, as well as the Early Pregnancy Assessment Clinic, Neonatal Unit, Colposcopy Clinic and the Acute Pain Service. Their visit was sponsored by the Brian Spurrett Foundation.



2012-2013



2012 proved to be another busy year. An educational forum was held in Nadi by AFOG



supported by RANZCOG, FOGS, UNFPA, ASSCP and other funders and partners including PSRH. At the same forum, the Fiji O&G Society (FOGS) was launched with A/Prof Swaran Naidu as the President.



Some of the participants at the Nadi Educational Forum.



The PSRH Board Meeting and breakfast in Nadi. The PSRH has a face to face meeting at the biennial conferences and in the off year if there were workshops to be delivered and if there were funds available. Frances Turrall (PSRH EO, 2012-2016) in attendance.

At the same meeting, the Board had a strategy meeting facilitated by Dr Ken Clark.

There were several regional meetings that the Society was invited to participate in. The responsibilities were shared for example, A/Prof Gyaneshwar and Dr Ekeroma attended regional meetings of UNFPA and WHO to discuss selected Clinical Management Guidelines on Complications of Pregnancy and Childbirth.

Vanuatu Nov 2012 Research Workshop

The clinical team in Vanuatu were hugely supportive of doing research but didn't know where to start and there were no research mentors. Dr Rufina Latu was supportive of the team doing clinical audit when she was based in the Vanuatu WHO office.



Midwife Christine Jackson, Dr Rufina Latu, Dr Kevin Bisili, Dr Robert Vocor, Dr Tony Harry discussing the importance of clinical research and audit.



Royal Australasian College of Surgeons through the PIPs funded clinical visits to the Solomon Islands



Launch of the BRRACAP Study 10 March 2013

The planning of the Building Reproductive Health Research and Clinical Audit Capacity in the Pacific started in 2007 soon after the PSRH Board meeting which approved the principle that all reproductive health workers should be engaged in research or audit in order to improve health outcomes.

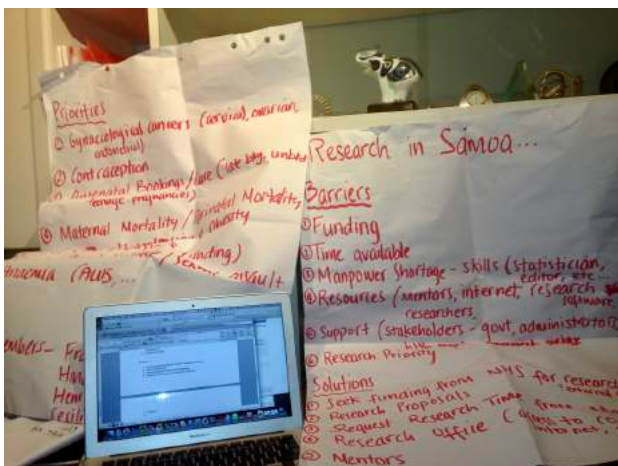
The project was developed into a PhD project by Dr Ekeroma and 23 health workers from Tonga, Samoa, Fiji, Solomon Is, Vanuatu and the Cook Islands were recruited. A research workshop was held in Auckland over a week delivered by the academic staff of Auckland University, Fiji National University, Auckland University and the University of New South Wales.



At the launch, we had four Pacific parliamentarians attend including Aupito Su'a Sio the MP for Mangere.



A/Prof Amanda Noovao of FNU listening intently to A/Prof Tim Kenealy with Swaran and Falahola looking on.



Mountain of data was collected on enablers and barriers of research in the Pacific Islands.

Response to the Pacific Health Development Agenda, AusAid priorities, 2012. *"RANZCOG and PSRH supports the strengthening of health systems and efficiencies across the Pacific. Health services and programmes can be delivered effectively only in environments where corporate and clinical governance exist. Investment in governance and management systems is important and should be ongoing."*

PSRH Newsletter April 2012, Dr Peter White: *The commitment of RANZCOG to the work of PSRH was confirmed by the recent decision of the RANZCOG Board to continue to provide funding to PSRH to enable the employment of an Executive Officer to ensure effective the day to day running of the PSRH Secretariat in New Zealand. The College is all too aware of the demands placed on members of a membership-based organisation striving to deliver initiatives that will make a significant difference to the people who are the subject of the aims and objectives of such organisations and the Board is pleased to be able to assist in a tangible way by*

renewing an arrangement that will run for the next three years.

As members may be aware, Ms Carmel Walker, Senior Coordinator of Asia Pacific Services at RANZCOG, who has worked tirelessly on behalf of PSRH over many years was awarded the inaugural PSRH President's Medal at the most recent Biennial General Meeting of PSRH held in Honiara in 2011. On behalf of the RANZCOG Board and Council, members, and staff, I congratulate Carmel for this recognition. Carmel works tenaciously to enhance the opportunities available to assist health professionals based in the Pacific to increase their knowledge and skills, which can then be translated to improved health outcomes at the local level and is a deserving recipient of this award.



10th PSRH conference 2013, Apia, Samoa



At the conference venue with the Minister of Health who opened the conference.

The 10th conference was a huge success with close to 200 participants. The theme was: *Innovative Approaches to Women's Health.*



The late midwife Alunita Bulicokocoko (on right) is remembered as an active member of PSRH,

fiercely advocating for midwifery educational opportunities and better care for women.

At the conference, Carmel Walker continued to develop the Midwifery Leadership Development Seminars which was then turned into very successful market place.



PNG men are the subject of ongoing negative reports from local and international media, research institutions, government departments, and non-governmental organisations on issues of violence against women and children including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and community violence.⁷ Men are castigated for causing pregnancy, not using condoms, wanting large families, not wanting themselves or their partners to access family planning, using women as baby factories, and not supporting their female partners during pregnancy, delivery, or breast feeding. Conversely, there are few messages guiding men on “how to” support their partners, and they are often excluded from these care giving nurturing roles by the health system. (Browne, KC. Pacific Journal of Reproductive Health 2017;1(5):214-217)

The first midwife to deliver the Brian Spurrett oration – Prof Pat Brodie of the Australian College of Midwives.



Prof Michael Permezel (President RANZCOG) with College officials, Alec Ekeroma (President PSRH) with Prof Pat Brodie after the oration.



The Solomon Island midwives are always prepared to perform to win on cultural night. The cultural night has developed into a key feature of the conference. More of these videos will be posted on the [PSRH Youtube Channel](#).

The flag was inspired by Dr John Ah Ching in 2013. Not sure about the Australian colours but the stars represent the member countries of PSRH.



A key role of PSRH is to support national professional societies. We have endeavoured to schedule workshops, by invitation from national societies, as pre-local-conference workshops. We have done these successfully in Samoa and Fiji.



(PSRH Newsletter Dec 2012, Alec Ekeroma): “In Fiji, I was privileged to be the external examiner for

the postgraduate exams at the Medical School. The local examiners were: Prof Rajat Gyaneshwar, Drs Swaran Naidu, Amanda Noovao, James Fong and Pushpa Nusair, who also happen to be the undergraduate and postgraduate teachers and supervisors. There were 19 trainees and 6 of them were into their last year of specialist training. This is a contrast to when I examined there 12 years ago when there were only 3 trainees in total. I was impressed by the potential and the quality of most of the final year trainees and diploma students. With the right support and supervision, these trainees will be the future leaders in the discipline equipped to tackle the major O&G health needs in our region."

Support for the regional training institutions is part of our work in workforce development. It is satisfying to see trainees grow into confident specialist colleagues.



And a delicious lovo at the end of a hard day's work always goes down well. On this occasion, Vinaka to Dr Ite Cammock's family.

2014-2015



The Pacific Island Programme with the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons funded Intrapartum Care workshops designed by

RANZCOG in collaboration with PSRH. These workshops were delivered in Vanuatu, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga and the Solomon Islands.

PSRH Board Meeting August, Nadi, 2014



Dr Alec Ekeroma with the two Vice Presidents, midwife Kathleen Gapirongo and Dr Pushpa Nusair. Back row (l-r): Dr John Ah Ching, MW Aliote Galuvakadua, Dr Rufina Latu, Ms Frances Turrall (Executive Officer), Dr Gunzee Gawin.

The Board approved the creation of the PEMNeT programme.

PSRH Workshops

The PSRH Workshops require an approved lead facilitator who is an expert in the field and who is committed to develop the workshop's curriculum and faculty. They are all volunteers.

The colposcopy workshop lead, Dr Jeffrey Tan of Melbourne, developed the PSRH colposcopy workshop curriculum.



Secretariat



The PSRH Secretariat meetings are monthly and becomes more frequent leading up to workshops and conferences. In this picture Frances Turrall (EO) meeting with two volunteers (Celia and Natalie) and the Head of Secretariat.



While a high percentage of women had some knowledge of how to avoid pregnancies and how STIs were contracted this did not translate to the practice of safe sex or use of contraceptives. Review of current education and health programs is necessary to ensure that misinformation and false perceptions do not act as barriers. The influence of the partner needs further research. (Naidu et al. Pacific Journal of Reproductive Health 2017;1(5):223-231)

Advocacy



A major part of PSRH work is advocacy. Heads of clinical services from around the Pacific gathered in Suva to discuss improvement in services and funding sponsored by an AusAid programme – Strengthening Specialised Clinical Services in the Pacific (SSCSIP). PSRH was there as a professional organisation advocating for reproductive health services and for continuous professional development.

Support for Postgraduate Students at FNU

Prof Michael Permezel and Dr Alec Ekeroma with FNU final year Maters trainees.



RANZCOG and PSRH are supportive of the postgraduate education in the region and are supportive of professional development opportunities for trainees.

The RANZCOG conferences provides opportunities for young specialists and trainees to network with Fellows and learn. It also provides opportunities a platform for them to share their research and experience. Had dinner with these future leaders in Brisbane where I presented on improving care for women in the Pacific.



11th PSRH workshops and conference July 2015, Suva, Fiji

A “very successful conference” was how most summed up the 2015 PSRH conference that was held in Suva Fiji, 7-10th July. Others used the words “excellent, beyond expectations, eye-opener, fantastic learning”. I guess the best measure is when someone says: “This is my first

time to a PSRH conference, I should have attended the previous ones, I am coming back again”

The PSRH conference was preceded by eight concurrent workshops running for one to three days and attended by 160 participants, most of whom were from the host nation. The PSRH core workshops were: Research and Audit, Anal sphincter repair, Ultrasound scanning, Pacific Emergency Maternal and Neonatal Training, and Colposcopy. However, new workshops were introduced in the: Fetal Surveillance Education Programme, Manual Vacuum Aspiration, Laparoscopy and Jadelle and IUCD insertion. The feedback and the educational needs of our members favoured the development and dissemination of skills workshops.

The conference, which was attended by 400 participants from all over the Pacific was opened by the President of Fiji, Ratu Epeli Nailatikau.



Launch of the PEMNeT Programme

The PEMNeT Manual was launched at the Suva conference. The programme was approved by the PSRH Board in 2014 and was authored by no less than 30 clinicians from around the Pacific and co-edited by Alec Ekeroma and Mathews Mathai. The printing and dissemination was funded by Counties Manukau and Send Hope Not Flowers.



**The Pacific Emergency
Maternal and Neonatal
Training Manual**



EDITED BY

Alec Ekeroma & Matthews Mathai

Pacific Society for Reproductive Health
ISBN 978-1-927201-02-2

We received huge assistance from Tim Draycott and the team from PROMPT.

In fact, Tim Draycott, being an

accomplished statesman was proceeded to teach PEMNeT at the Suva conference.



PEMNeT Workshop



We have an army of volunteers who are willing to assist as facilitators. The Ultrasound Scan workshop is always popular with doctors and increasingly with midwives. Sangeeta Kumar and Fika Vucago stepped up to the mark.

The Perineal Repair workshop is always popular with midwives and doctors.



Some of the participants



There were 400 participants at the conference with a full main auditorium at the University of the South Pacific.

There were many highlights of the conference. The Pacific Emergency Maternal and Neonatal Training Manual and the Pacific Journal of Reproductive Health were launched. The President's Medal were awarded to Dr Rufina Latu and Prof Rajat Gyaneshwar. Best research awards and the associate membership of RANZCOG certificates were presented. The cultural night competition was awarded to the well-prepared Solomon Islands contingent.

Launch of the Pacific Journal of Reproductive Health

The Pacific Journal of Reproductive Health is an independent publication of the Pacific Society for Reproductive Health (PSRH) Charitable Trust and administered by the Pacific Women's Health Research Unit of the University of Auckland. The Journal began publishing in 2015 as a means to

increase research evidence from the Pacific region aided by research collaborations with Pacific-rim countries.

The Journal is also to provide a platform for evidence dissemination for researchers and clinicians from the Pacific and Pacific-rim countries.

Editors of the Journal are:

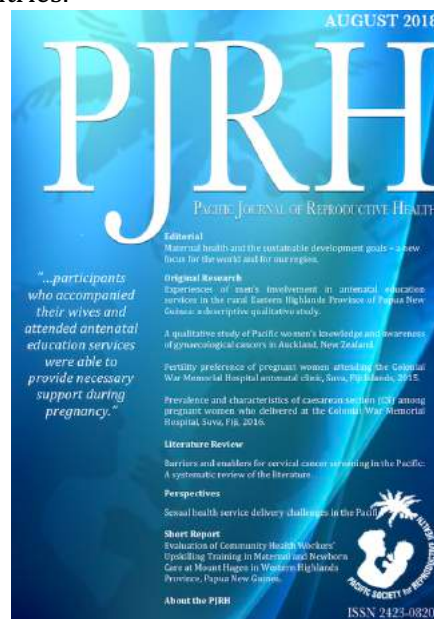
Prof Alec Ekeroma

(Chief in

Editor), Prof Caroline Homer, A/Prof Swaran Naidu, Dr Rufina Latu, A/Prof Tim Kenealy, Prof Glen Mola, Prof Peter Stone, A/Prof Nicola Hawley and A/Prof Shanti Raman.

The Journal Manager is: Dr Theresa Mittermeier:

theresa.mittermeier@psrh.org.nz.



PSRH Executive Board for 2015-2017

Kathleen Gapirongo - President; Aliote Galuvakadua - Vice-President (Midwifery); Pushpa Nusair - Vice President (Medical) Alec Ekeroma - Treasurer; Peter Stone - RANZCOG rep Moape Bavou, Mary Magabe, Kara Okesene-Gafa, and Paula Puawe.



Newsletter Vol 2, Issue 10, Sept 2015, Kathleen Gapirongo:



"My very first contact with PSRH was in 2005 when it was held in Tanoa Hotel in Nadi. That time, there were fewer than 10 participants from Solomons and the whole group did not exceed 100. My participation then was very limited as I was only a junior staff with fewer responsibilities. My executive participation with PSRH started in 2009 where the PSRH conference in Auckland elected me into the executive board to represent midwives in the Pacific. I found myself suddenly becoming more

engaged and responsible when Solomon Is hosted the biennial conference in July 2011.

Becoming a PSRH president was never a dream for me. But now I have to come to terms with it and move on with it. I am indebted to the Fiji Speaker of Parliament, Dr Jiko Fatafehi Luveni who addressed the conference with sheer passion on women's role in positions of leadership. I was inspired by her speech and words of encouragement. As a Pacific woman, Dr Jiko plays a role model for other Pacific women...one has to acquire humility and integrity, and the determination to excel.

So my dear fellow midwives and doctors in PSRH, I am so humbled to be the first midwife President of PSRH. Rest assured and at peace knowing that you are there to support me as we travel this journey together and work as partners for the well-being of our people in the Pacific. After all, we are all PSRH travellers on a journey where we listen and respect each other, bear one another's burdens, alleviate sufferings and improve the health and well-being of our families across our Pacific Island countries."



Volume 1, Issue 4 was published:

[Continuing professional development and challenges facing newly graduated Midwives in Papua New Guinea.](#)

Alison MOORES, Paula PUAWE, Nancy BUASI, Florence WEST, Mary K SAMOR, Nina JOSEPH, Michele RUMSEY, Angela DAWSON, Caroline SE HOMER

In the same issue, Litia Narube *et al* reported on the Pregnancy Outcomes in Women with Heart Disease at the CWM Hospital, Suva Fiji and Jacob Daube *et al* discussed Barriers to Contraceptive Use in South Tarawa, Kiribati.

Launch of the PNG Midwifery Society



The PNG Midwifery Society had the largest conference ever in November 2015 with more than 100 midwives. The team from the University Technology Sydney led by Prof Caroline Homer provided educational rigour into the programme. Respectful maternity care was emphasised. Jennifer Pyakayia was voted President.

2016-2017



The late Mary Magabe passed in office as a PSRH Board Member. In her memory, the PSRH Board approved the PSRH Mary Magabe Scholarship.



The Mary Magabe scholarship is open to all nurses and midwives working in the Pacific Islands to fund a postgraduate course in any of the Pacific countries including Australia and New Zealand. The scholarship is worth NZ\$5,000 and is awarded annually although there has been a lack

of applications. Email the: secretariat@prh.org.nz for more information.



PSRH was invited to be part of the Asia Pacific Regional Network on HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Sexual Health. WHO recently launched an Operational Framework linking Sexual Health and Reproductive Health.



PSRH has received assistance from Send Hope Not Flowers and in this picture, Prof Glen Mola is holding sutures from Emma Macdonald of Send Hope for the Birthing Unit in Port Moresby.

PEMNT Train the Trainers Workshop



The first PEMNeT Train the Trainers workshop in Auckland was a huge success with selected clinical leaders from eleven countries in the region attending. Bronwyn Robinson of RANZCOG was instrumental in setting the pace of interactive learning and used the experiences gathered to co-edit the PEMNeT Facilitator's Guide. Drs James Fong, Sharron Bolitho and Martin Sowter were co-facilitators of the workshop with assistance from Midwife Christine Jackson of Vanuatu.

Around the region



Dr Alec Ekeroma was invited as a guest speaker at the PNG O&G Society Symposium in Alotau Milne

Bay Province and at the Fiji O&G Society Symposium in Nadi. Pictured are some of the trainees from 2016 who are now junior consultants in the service of both countries. Although there has been an increase in the number of trainees over the last 20 years, the numbers need increasing further to meet the demand for O&G specialists in the region.

Workshops Continue to be Delivered



Meanwhile, Dr Bolitho and Dr Ioanna Beiataua are delivering PEMNeT workshops in various parts of Kiribati and Dr Smallbridge is delivering a Perineal Repair workshop in Samoa.



Wishing not to be outdone, Dr May Aung of the Cook Islands emailed that they also performed a PEMNeT training workshop in Rarotonga.



Besides workshops, the local teams require assistance with surgery on complex patients. The Counties Manuka DHB contract with the NZ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade stipulates that transfer of skills occur to build the capacity of local teams.



Vae Kepa from Nauru was the last Brian Spurrett Midwifery Fellow to have a clinical attachment at Middlemore Hospital. Pictured with Midwives

Nga Masters (NZCOM) and Sanne Wesseling (PSRH-MMH coordinator).

Preparations for the PSRH2017 in Vanuatu



Meeting the Conference Local Organising Committee (LOC) in Vanuatu to reassure of the Secretariat support, discuss sponsoring details and be reassured that the conference will be viable.



PSRH2017 Vanuatu



Another hugely successful conference. The fantastic work by the LOC with unstinting support from the Vanuatu Ministry of Health and donor agencies such as UNFPA made this conference one to remember for the wealth in learning and experience shared.



The Ultrasound Workshop was led by Dr Bronwyn Andrew from Newcastle.

The PEMNeT workshop was led by Dr Bolitho, Dr Tim Draycott and Midwife Paula Puawe.

The Family Planning workshop was led by A/Prof Pushpa Nusair, Dr Rufina Latu, Prof Glen Mola, and Dr Pulane Tiabere (UNFPA)

The Research Workshop was led by Dr Alec Ekeroma and Prof Caroline Homer.



The Perineal Repair Workshop was led by Dr Hannah Krause, Dr Jackie Smalldridge, Dr Mairi Wallace and Prof Judith Koh.

The Colposcopy Workshop was led by Dr Jeffrey Tan and A/Prof Annabelle Farnsworth.



The current PSRH Board was elected with A/Prof Pushpa Nusair as President, Midwife Paula Puawe as Vice President Midwifery and Dr Kara Okesene-Gafa as Vice President Medical. (back row l-r): Nancy Pego, Tagiyaco Vakaloloma, Gunzee Gawin, Kathleen Gapirongo, Roy Watson (RANZCOG rep).



The Secretariat team: Udit Shah, Alec Ekeroma, Siobhan Patia and Theresa Mittermeier.

2018-2019



PSRH Workshops Suva Fiji



The Board of PSRH decided to deliver a suite of workshops in Suva just prior to the FOGS conference. Six different workshops were delivered concurrently to more than 200 participants. The workshops were: PEMNeT, Research and Audit, Colposcopy, Palliative Care, Family Planning, Professional Development. PSRH Board members contributed to the FOGS meeting as speakers encouraging networks and exchange.

The Board also took the opportunity to have a meeting.



The Research workshop was facilitated by Dr Kara Okesene-Gafa, Prof Rajat Gyaneshwar,

A/Prof Swaran Naidu, Prof Alec Ekeroma, Dr Etivina Lovo.



Midwife Paula Puawe, Vice-President (Midwifery) PSRH, represented the Society at the State of the Pacific MNNCAH Workforce meeting in Nadi last September.

PEMNeT workshop Vanuatu



Dr Sharron Bolitho - A week-long workshop to train Facilitators to be able to run the Pacific Emergency and Neonatal Training Course (PEMNeT) was held recently in Vanuatu from 29th of October to the 2nd of November 2018. This was the best PEMNeT Facilitator Training to date and a pleasure to be involved in. The format of 3 days facilitator training followed by supporting the new facilitators to run a 2-day course was a very successful format, as it gave an opportunity to immediately put into practice what had been learnt. It was a joy to watch the new facilitators' confidence grow in leaps and bounds after they had conducted their first course, especially as there was a lot of anxiety prior to the course because most of the facilitators were midwives and on this course most of the participants were interns.

And then Next Year:

2019 PSRH Conference Port Moresby



The PNG Midwifery Society and the PNG O&G Society invite your attendance at the 13th Biennial Conference of the Pacific Society for Reproductive Health, Port Moresby, PNG. July 6-11, 2019. The conference venue is the Stanley Hotel.



We urge our members to start fund raising activities early and/or seek sponsorship to the conference. Funding will be constrained and there might be only two to four participants from each country funded by donors to the conference. The Secretariat will confer with PSRH country reps in March 2019 as to who the two to four people will be.

ABSTRACTS

The call for abstracts for the PSRH2019 is now open and closes 15th May 2019. Instructions on how these are submitted will be posted on the conference website soon. All accepted abstracts are published in the Pacific Journal of Reproductive Health.

<https://psrh.org.nz/programmes/psrh-png-conference-2019/>

Besides the conference in Port Moresby, we are planning workshops in the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Samoa, Kiribati, Tonga and Micronesia in conjunction with our partners and sponsors.

SPONSORS

We are grateful to our donors in the last two financial years. We wouldn't have been able to do this work of love without your support.



The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists



ASCCP
Australian Society for Colposcopy and Cervical Pathology



Support safe birth for every woman, everywhere
www.sendhope.org



ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS



The President and Board of PSRH wishes all our readers and members a peaceful Christmas and holiday season with loved ones.

As always please feel free to contact a member of our secretariat team if you require assistance or have any queries. Email: secretariat@psrh.org.nz

The Secretariat Team: Alec Ekeroma, Siobhan Patia, Udit Shah, Astra Rushton-Allan, Theresa Mittermeier, Peri Ekeroma.

If there is a gift we want for Christmas, then it is for our readers to be safe, happy and loved.

But I wish to return to the start. Happy 25th Birthday PSRH; and many more returns.



