

Finau

PHD EDITOR

PHD matters

This issue has again been a challenge and I need to thank all concerned. HRH Princess Pilolevu Tuita has graced PHD with her thoughts and support. We humbly thank HRH Pilolevu and TongaSat for enriching the Pacific health workers through their personal involvement and representing a private sector effort for health of Pacificans.

The mammoth task of stimulating the production of papers on Tonga called for patience and perseverance. Many thanks to Dr Seini Kupu, PHD country editor for Tonga, and the Tonga Medical Association members for their contribution. To the authors I hope we do justice to your sweat and tears.

This PHD has brought together many papers on Tonga. However, papers from the other Pacific jurisdictions have also found a place in this issue to maintain the regional focus and the strengthening of the North-South dialogue. The East-West dialogue in the Pacific have been strong and needs to continue whereas North-South needs nursing and injections to grow. Perhaps TongaSat can again contribute to enhance this North-South-East-West dialogue through more resourcing of PHD and the use of its satellite footprints.

Alcohol and traditional healing have featured strongly in this issue. Perhaps a focus on *Healthy Islands* will provide the strategic framework for addressing these two issues. Dr Katonga's "play" is a specific example of how this framework may be used to resolve sexual problems, alcohol abuse, define the role of traditional healing, and many other disease problems. The grass-root suggestion (e.g. fly traps)

for typhoid may be usable in meningococcal disease in New Zealand (e.g. the use of handkerchief to decrease droplet spread).

Another group of papers highlight the importance of routinely collected data and usefulness for evidence-based decision making. In New Zealand we need more ethnic specific information and in Tonga better reporting and recording. Better analysis of routinely collected data will produce information for better health service development. The application of rapid research methods to existing data bases can provide timely answers to specific strategic questions for health service development. These will open up the data cemeteries in the Pacific Ministries of Diseases.

The next issue of PHD, March 2000 (vol 7:1) is on the health of Maori in New Zealand. This is consistent with PHD's view that New Zealand Maori and the Aborigines of Australia are also Pacificans. We hope that we will eventually have a PHD issue on the Aborigines of Australia following on our successful PHD issue on the Maoli of Hawai'i – so successful that the Maoli have now reserved the second issue for 2001.

It is with some trepidation that we round off the last century and passing from childhood into adolescence. The new millenium and the prospect of further growth is daunting when there is still uncertainty in resources. We need you to subscribe, get subscribers and become prolific thinkers and authors. This is what PHD needs to support our future growth. I thank my co-editors for the last six years and look forward to the next sixty.

As the editor, I ask for new labourers of love for the next millenium. We need to strengthen the editorial committee and board of advisors. We need more Pacificans defining Pacificness through research, writing and publishing. We need to use PHD as a launching pad for Pacificans to become the custodians of information that defines, identifies, maintains and develops Pacificness and its ethnicities.

It is all these that will make PHD matter!

Sitaleki A. Finau

After all service to humanity is at the heart of the medical and health profession. And there is no harm in reminding doctors and other health workers that their duty is first and foremost to human beings ...

Hon. Dr Sione Tapa 1983 in TMA: Selected Papers