



Newsletter
Quarter 1, 2024

Contents

1. IMOP Presidents note.....	3
2. Meet the Executives.....	4
3. Member Profile: Dr. Sale Vurobaravu.....	5
4. Congratulations to PMA scholarship PHD candidate	6
5. Updates from Samoa – Endoscopy Service	7
6. Pacific Delegates to overseas conference stories	8
7. Selected publications of interest	13

IMOP President's Note: Dr Emi Penuel



A God blessed year 2024 to the IMOP community.

2024 marks the 10-year anniversary of IMOP after its inception and legalisation on the 10th February, 2014. The organisation was launched after a year of brainstorming of esteemed senior consultant physicians Professor Robert Moulds, Dr Saatu Viala (Samoa), Dr Joiji Malani (Fiji) Dr Gyaneshwar Rao (Fiji), Dr Mai ling Perman (FSM), Dr William May (Fiji) , Dr Shrish Acharya (Fiji) , Dr Sione Latu (Tonga) , Dr Griffith (Vanautu) and myself.

The organisation was set up with key priority reasons

1. Have an organisation of professionals within the same discipline with common interests and practice as colleagues and peers in the practice of Internal Medicine
2. To promote and represent the practice of Internal Medicine in the Pacific
3. To promote the ethical principles of Internal Medicine applicable to Pacific Island Nations and Territories
4. Provide a common platform for exchanging of ideas and to come together and have robust dialogue of Internal Medicine Issues/interest/practice changes and evolution of best practice and trends of medicine.
5. Platform to interact with all Internal Medicine physicians and stakeholders, colleagues and other interest group
6. Platform to provide CPD resources learning support for our trainees

The first ever Scientific conference we started off with 15 registered IMOP members and the inclusion of post graduate trainees of Internal Medicine.

Over the subsequent years we have had new recruits and a total of 30 -40 active members over 6-8 years. The past 2 years Annual Scientific conferences have had over 60 attendees of both members and non-members

Information sharing for the IMOP members are via virtual platforms Zoom, the message sharing application Viber, and Facebook pages including, collaboration with Fiji National University and Colonial War Memorial Pathology and Radiology Post graduate training.

I want to wish you all the very best in the remaining days in the year 2024.

Meet your executives!

President: Dr Emi Penuel



Vice- President: Dr. Aminiasi Rokocakau



Secretary: Dr Tracey Young-Sharma



Treasurer: Dr Abhitesh Raj



Western Rep: Dr Lalit Kumar



Regional Rep: Dr Emire Meone



Trainee Rep:
Dr Jasmial Nand



Member Profile: Dr. Sale Vurobaravu



Halo Olketa, my name is Saletamata Olivier Vurobaravu, though most people call me Sale. I hail from Amalo Village on Malo Island, Vanuatu and from have a maternal link to Marseilles, France. Currently, I'm serving in my third year as a junior consultant at the esteemed Vila Central Hospital, Vanuatu's national referral hospital. In August 2022, I was privileged to graduate with a Masters in Internal Medicine after spending a little over four years at CWMH and FNU during challenging times of Covid-19.

I'm deeply grateful for the invaluable mentorship and guidance I received from esteemed physicians like Drs. Rao, Malani, and Mai Ling, as well as from other wonderful teachers like Drs. Acharya and Ane. I will treasure the friendships I forged with colleagues from Fiji and across the Pacific. But I certainly don't miss doing night shifts!

Presently, I work alongside our two esteemed senior consultants Dr. Minado Paul and Dr. Sereana Natuman, who lead our Internal Medicine department. Together with our team, we strive to provide the best possible care. My areas of interest include Cardiology and Gastroenterology, where I perform echocardiograms and a weekly list of endoscopies for the hospital.

Moreover, I am keen in improving specialist healthcare access in remote areas, participating in specialist outreach programs to remote islands. In addition to my clinical responsibilities, I am honoured to serve as the Chairman of the Vanuatu Medical Internship Programme, where we endeavour to mentor and guide aspiring doctors. I also hold the role of Vice-President of the Vanuatu Medical Doctor's Association. Outside of work, I cherish moments with my family, indulge in reading for personal growth, actively engage in community development initiatives, enjoy sports, and relish traveling. Looking ahead, I aspire to pursue subspecialty training in Gastroenterology, either in Australia or New Zealand.

I firmly believe that my faith in Jesus, hard work, and the guidance of mentors are foundational to achieving success.

CONGRATULATIONS to Dr William May (FIJI) – recipient of the Pasifika Medical Association Sir Terepai Tuamure Moate International Study Award for 2023.

Dr May plans to pursue a PHD through James Cook University, Australia.



Samoa Endoscopy Service by Dr Folototo Leavai

Endoscopy service has been available in Samoa since 1997. Visiting gastroenterologists from Australia provided local training for two doctors and two nurses at the time. People with epigastric problems ranging from pain, bleeding, anaemia and weight loss were referred to the endoscopy clinic. At this time, only upper GI endoscopy was available. For unknown reasons, the service was discontinued and patients received medical treatment based on symptoms only, without proper diagnosis. In the year 2018, through the Pacific island project (PIP), Samoa received tremendous support from the ANZGITA team in reviving the endoscopy service by providing local training for both doctors and nurses, continuous teaching via virtual presentations and consultations via email, viber and messenger.





Figure 1: EVBL skill training using latex glove, followed by video endoscopy skill training using similar model




Figure 2: First Successful independent EVBL of oesophageal varices in Samoa at TTM hospital with remote support


Discussion/conclusion: Successful EVBL was performed in this isolated setting after low cost simulation and training models that used local resources to identify training needs and develop skill. This is the first case of EVBL performed in the history of medicine in Samoa – the successful outcome speaks highly of the benefits of using simple training methods to teach complex procedures and remote videoteleconferencing support. Such a model could be utilised for skill training in other low resourced environments.


MINISTRY OF HEALTH
 MATAGALUEGA O SOIFUA MALOLOINA


DEAKIN UNIVERSITY

¹ Tupua Tamasese Meaole Hospital, Apia, Samoa
² Gastroenterology Department, Dunedin Hospital, Dunedin New Zealand
³ University Hospital Geelong, Victoria, Australia
⁴ Deakin University Waurn Ponds, Victoria, Australia
⁵ Australia and New Zealand Gastroenterology International Training Association (ANZGITA)


ANZGITA
 Australia & New Zealand Gastroenterology International Training Association


Southern District Health Board
 Piki Te Ora

Through this partnership, the number of staffs who have received training include about 20 nurses and 10 doctors. A few of these staff also attended the annual endoscopy training at CWM Hospital in Fiji.

Both surgical and medical teams do endoscopy and these are conducted two days a week. The number of patients per day range from 9-12, including both gastro and colonoscopy from outpatient and inpatients. On rare occasions, the team also performs emergency scopes if needed during the week or afterhours including the weekend. Otherwise, most patients are optimized with medical therapy to await endoscopy on any of the allocated days. The service provides both diagnostic and interventional treatment.

Some exciting developments

There have been many exciting developments with the involvement of the ANZGITA team in building capacity and capabilities of the local staff. One of these achievements was the performance of the first variceal band ligation in Samoa in 2018 using a low cost, self-made simulator. We acknowledge Dr Chris Hair, nurse Karen Kempin and the ANZGITA team for the great assistance offered to make this a success for both the local team and the patient.

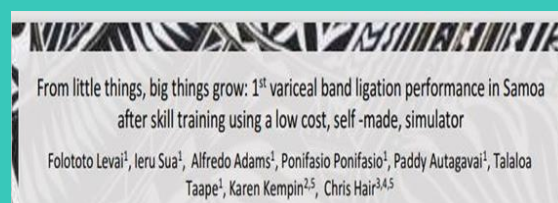
Epworth Hospital Observation training – Geelong



Samoa acknowledges the tremendous support from ANZGITA through capacity building, upskilling, equipment donation and consultation through case discussion and virtual learning. The professional connection and friendship established with these world class specialists goes a long way and we are forever indebted to their generous offer and support.

Future for endoscopy in Samoa

To have a sustainable and accessible endoscopy service in Samoa, continue to upskill its workforce and create more opportunities for capacity and capability building. We also aim to build research capacity in endoscopy to improve the care for patients with GI problems.



Pacific Delegate stories – Overseas Conference

Dr Bukitua Teuea (Kiribati)

Through connections and networks established from IMOP, I was fortunate enough to have attended an Antimicrobial Stewardship training in Singapore conducted over 2 days. The course was conducted by ID consultants who had several years of experience in combating antimicrobial resistance. It was precise, resourceful, enriching and a great capacity building experience which will lay the stepping stones for Kiribati's fight against antimicrobial resistance.



SINGAPORE ANTIMICROBIAL STEWARDSHIP TRAINING COURSE

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- 1. Explain the importance of antimicrobial stewardship in the context of the Singapore health care system
- 2. Describe the role of antimicrobial stewardship in the context of the Singapore health care system
- 3. Describe the role of antimicrobial stewardship in the context of the Singapore health care system

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 1. Describe the role of antimicrobial stewardship in the context of the Singapore health care system
- 2. Describe the role of antimicrobial stewardship in the context of the Singapore health care system
- 3. Describe the role of antimicrobial stewardship in the context of the Singapore health care system

REGISTRATION FEE

1. Local Participants: S\$1000

2. International Participants: S\$1500

3. Limited Places Available. To Apply, Please Contact Us at: 65072

4. Registration closes on 15 June 2023. We will confirm acceptance by 20 June 2023.

5. Payment can be made via bank transfer or cash on 15 June 2023.

6. Payment can be made via bank transfer or cash on 15 June 2023.

7. Payment can be made via bank transfer or cash on 15 June 2023.

8. Payment can be made via bank transfer or cash on 15 June 2023.

9. Payment can be made via bank transfer or cash on 15 June 2023.

10. Payment can be made via bank transfer or cash on 15 June 2023.

SCAN QR CODE TO REGISTER ONLINE NOW!

Co-organised by:

Ministry of Health Singapore, National Centre for Infectious Diseases, National University of Singapore, Singapore General Hospital, Singapore Eye Hospital, Singapore Children's Hospital, Singapore Polyclinic, Singapore Polytechnic, Singapore Management University, Singapore University of Technology and Design, Singapore Institute of Management, Singapore University of Social Sciences, Singapore University of Science and Technology, Singapore University of Engineering and Technology, Singapore University of Innovation and Design, Singapore University of Digital Studies, Singapore University of Health Sciences, Singapore University of Sports and Physical Education, Singapore University of Social Sciences, Singapore University of Science and Technology, Singapore University of Engineering and Technology, Singapore University of Innovation and Design, Singapore University of Digital Studies, Singapore University of Health Sciences, Singapore University of Sports and Physical Education.



Dr Sukafa Matanaicake (Fiji)



The World Heart Federation (WHF) held its first World Congress on RHD at Abu Dhabi, United Emirates from 2nd to 4th November, 2023. There were two research studies done in 2022, the Fiji antenatal echo screening (FANS) and the First-degree relative echo screening (Matavuvale). FANS study showed a 5% prevalence of RHD in pregnant women at the CWMH booking clinic and 4.9% in siblings of patients living with RHD in the Matavuvale study. As one of the investigators in both studies, my abstracts were accepted for e-poster presentation at the congress. This was my first international conference, and it was very exciting. RHD was prevalent in more countries than I thought. We all had similar stories on what this disease was doing to our health system and our people and the problems with access to care, health seeking behaviours, compliance with secondary prophylaxis and anticoagulation was voiced by many. Cardio-thoracic surgery was in Africa and Middle East but there were just too many patients who needed surgery. The “new” streptococcus A vaccine was a hot topic at the conference and could potentially save many lives at a lot less cost. I attended sessions in the clinical/therapeutic, strep A vaccine & patient advocacy categories. It was interesting to listen to health ministries from other countries discuss their RHD programs and how they sustained them. The actual burden of RHD in the world is not known and WHO emphasised the need to measure this by working together and sharing

information. Knowing the true burden of RHD would make it a “recognised” disease that needed urgent attention around the world.

In CWMH, the antenatal echo screening at booking is a part of the Obstetric services and identifying “asymptomatic” RHD has initiated secondary prophylaxis and a multi-disciplinary approach for mothers with severe disease. We hope to develop a similar program for secondary school students, and this will require planning and funding support. All newly diagnosed RHD patients are registered on the RFIS system and more accurate data will better inform government, communities (work, religious, traditional) and NGOs. Abu Dhabi was beautiful and modern with its unique culture and we enjoyed a break after the conference.



ASN Kidney Week 2023 by Dr Yogeshni Chandra (Fiji)



I had the privilege to attend the American Society of Nephrology Kidney Week from 1st to 5th of November 2023 at the Pennsylvania Convention Center in Philadelphia. The ASN Kidney week is the world's premier nephrology meeting which provides participants exciting and challenging opportunities to exchange knowledge, learn about the latest scientific and medical advances, and listen to engaging and provocative discussions with leading experts in the field of nephrology.

I was amongst the approximately 12300 participants from across the globe who attended this in-person event.

My week started with the pre-congress program on the Fundamentals of Renal Pathology which was a day long exhaustive introduction to renal pathology designed for non-pathologists. World leaders in renal pathology provided attentive interaction, discussion, guidance, and interpretation of pathologic findings in native and transplanted kidney biopsies.

From the moment I stepped into the bustling convention center, I could sense the palpable energy of shared purpose among the attendees. The conference boasted a diverse array of educational sessions, keynote lectures, symposia, and poster presentations, each offering a unique perspective on the multifaceted landscape of kidney disease.

One of the highlights of my experience was the breadth and depth of topics covered. From discussions on new therapeutic strategies for chronic kidney disease (CKD) to debates on emerging technologies like xenotransplantation

in kidney replacement therapy, ASN Kidney Week catered to the interests and expertise of attendees across various subspecialties within nephrology.

At the heart of ASN Kidney Week lay its robust scientific program, featuring groundbreaking research that pushed the boundaries of our understanding of kidney physiology, pathophysiology, and therapeutics. Engaging with leading researchers, clinicians, and scientists provided invaluable insights into the latest discoveries poised to revolutionize patient care.

I also took the opportunity to explore the historic city Philadelphia (*City of Brotherly Love*) and experience the American culture firsthand.

As I reflect on my experience at ASN Kidney Week 2023, I am reminded of the collective responsibility we bear as healthcare professionals to drive innovation, promote equity, and improve outcomes for individuals affected by kidney disease. The insights gained and connections forged at the conference serve as a catalyst for action, inspiring me to contribute actively to the advancement of nephrology through clinical practice, research and advocacy.



Selected publication of interest

1. Acute kidney injury : Incidence , aetiology, management and outcome measures of Samoan case series . Author : **Nathan Chadwick et.al**
https://journals.lww.com/annals-of-medicine-and-surgery/fulltext/2022/03000/acute_kidney_injury_incidence,_aetiology,.29.aspx
2. Early versus late anticoagulation in for stroke with atrial fibrillation
<https://www.nejm.org/doi/10.1056/NEJMoa2303048>
3. 2023 GEIS Guideline for gastrointestinal stromal tumours
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/17588359231192388>
4. Molecular and epidemiology of carbapenem resistant Acinetobacter Baumannii St2 in Oceania: a multi country cohort study
[https://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lanwpc/PIIS2666-6065\(23\)00214-6.pdf](https://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lanwpc/PIIS2666-6065(23)00214-6.pdf)
5. Using AI to undertake surveillance
[Automated healthcare-associated infection surveillance using an artificial intelligence algorithm - ScienceDirect](#)