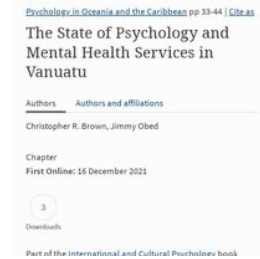
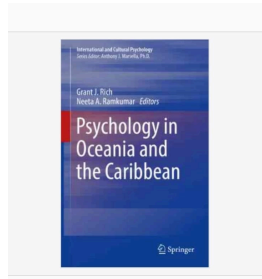


THE STATE OF PSYCHOLOGY AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN VANUATU



PRESENTER AND OTHER AUTHORS: DR CHRISTOPHER BROWN & DR JIMMY OBED

VANUATU 3RD HEALTH RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

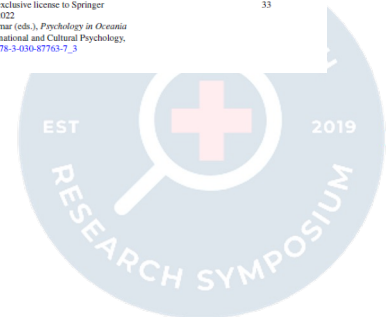
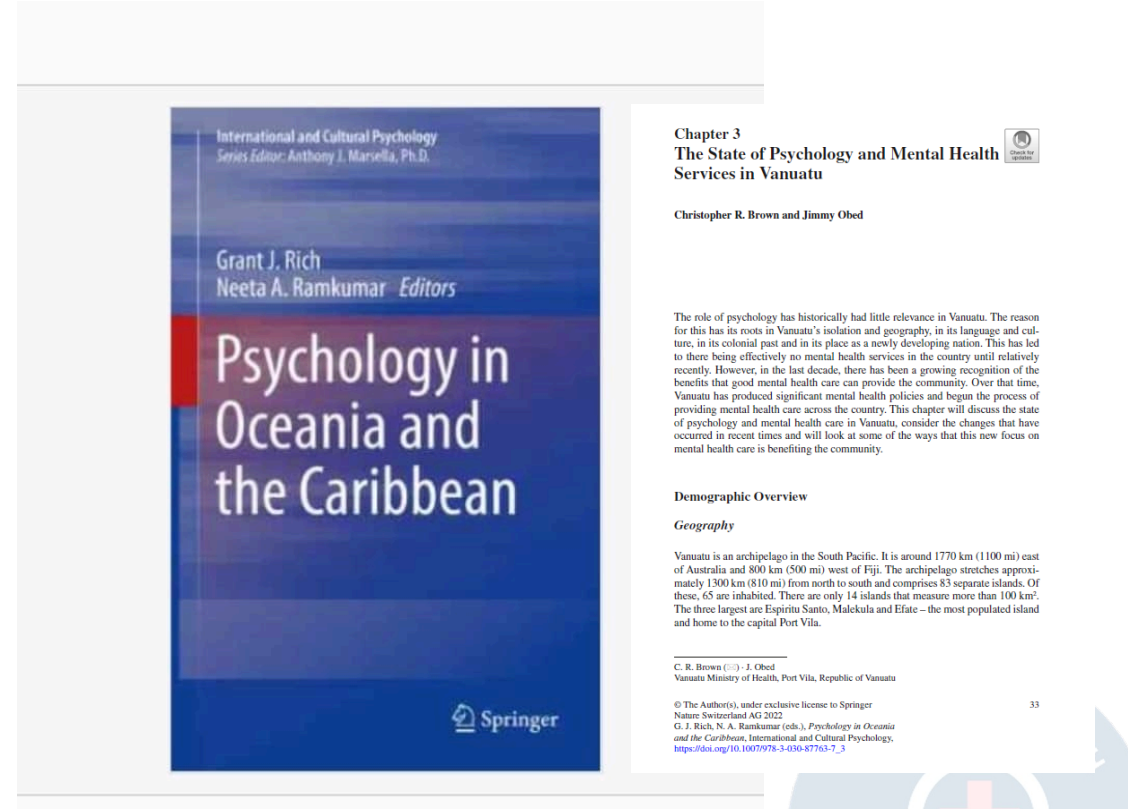
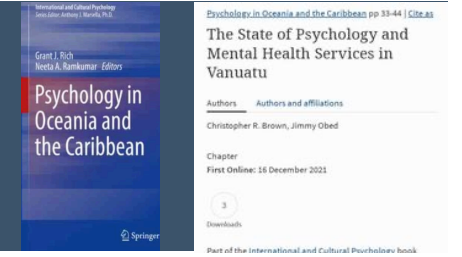
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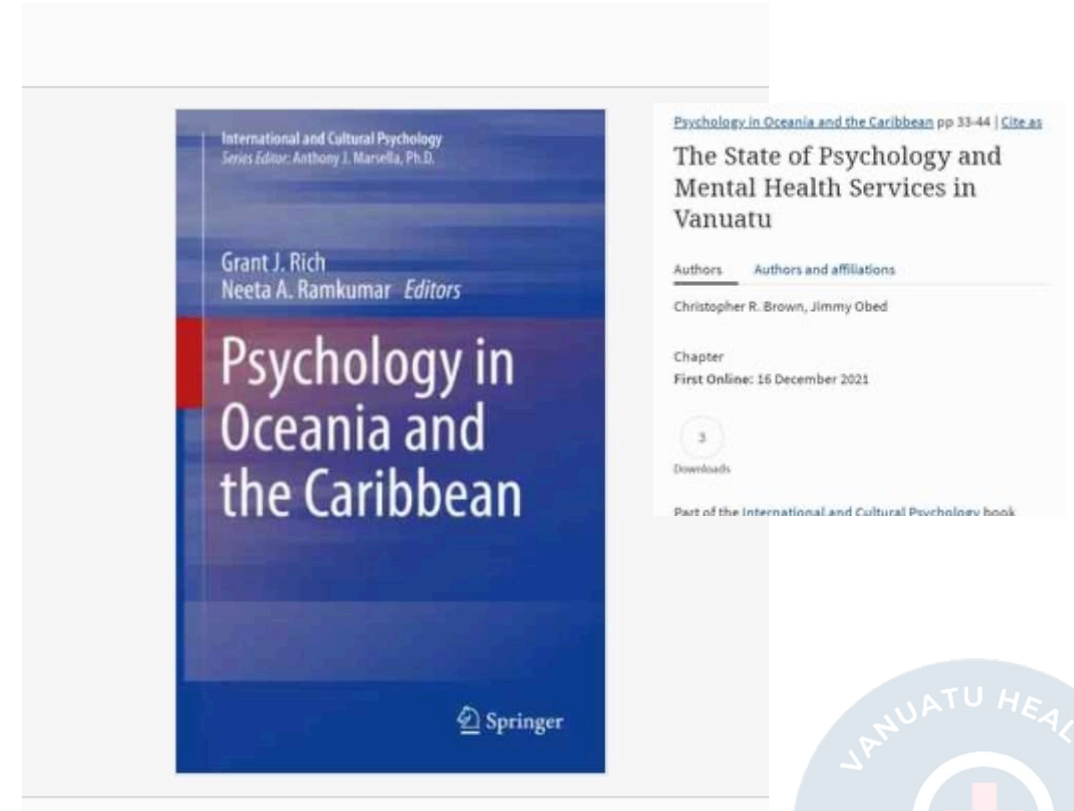
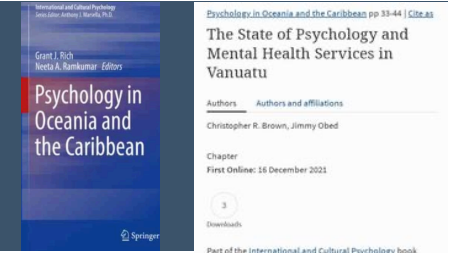
INTRODUCTION

- In 2021 Dr Obed and I were approached to provide a chapter for an academic book
- Published in “Psychology in Oceania and the Caribbean”
 - International and Cultural Psychology
 - Grant Rich (Editor), Walden University, USA



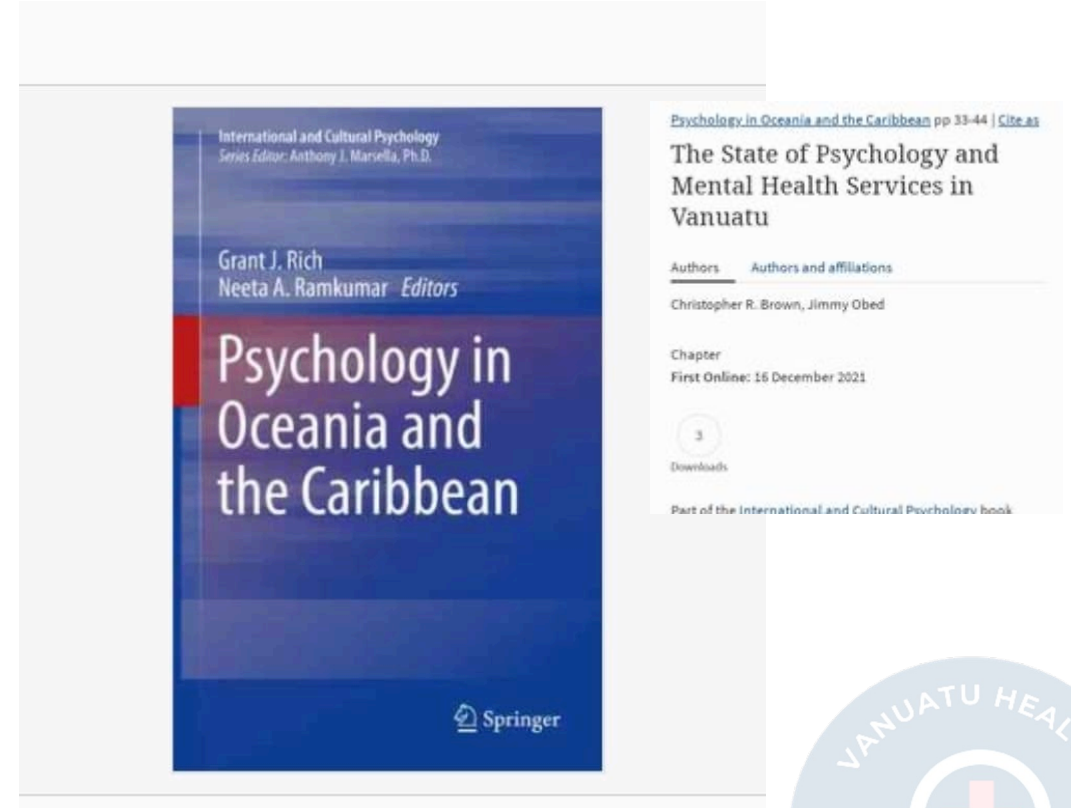
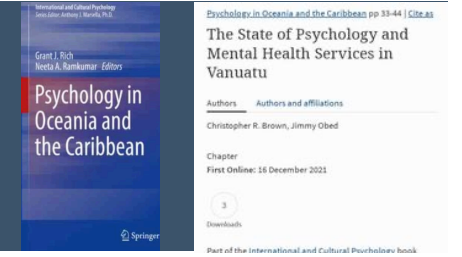
BACKGROUND

- Psychology has traditionally had little relevance in Vanuatu
 - Isolation and geography
 - Language and culture
 - Colonial past
 - It being a newly developing nation
- There have effectively been no mental health services in the country until relatively recently



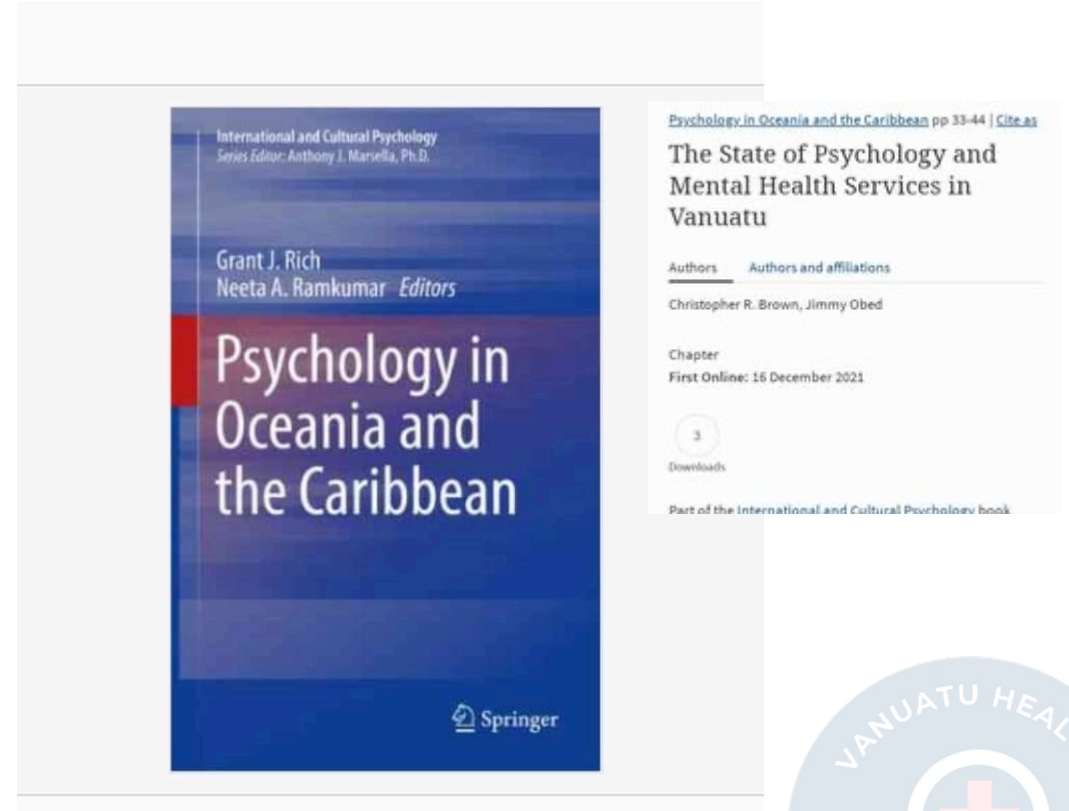
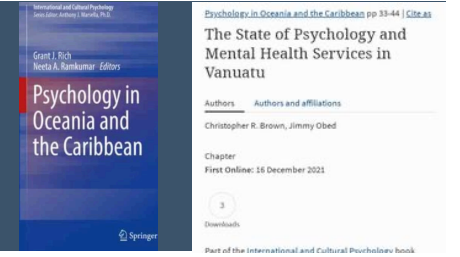
BACKGROUND

- In the last decade there has been a growing recognition of the benefits that good mental health care can provide
- This talk will outline the content of the book chapter as published
 - Key issues related to mental health
 - Progress and programs



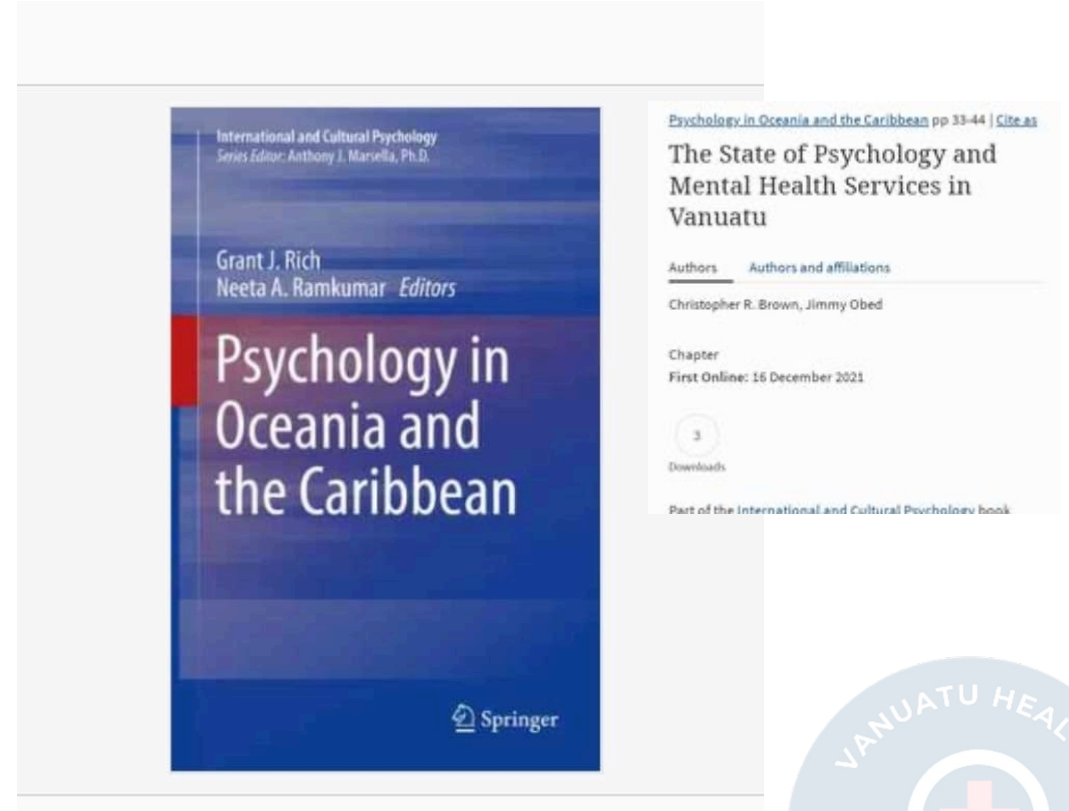
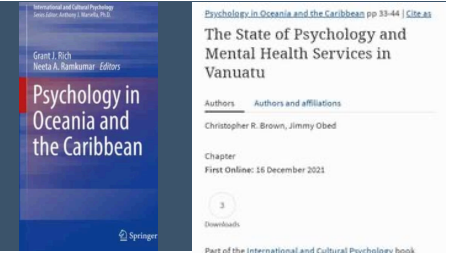
PSYCHOLOGY IN VANUATU

- Forster (2005) noted at that time
 - No perceived need for psychological services
 - No psychological associations
 - No mental health facilities
 - No understanding about the role of psychology



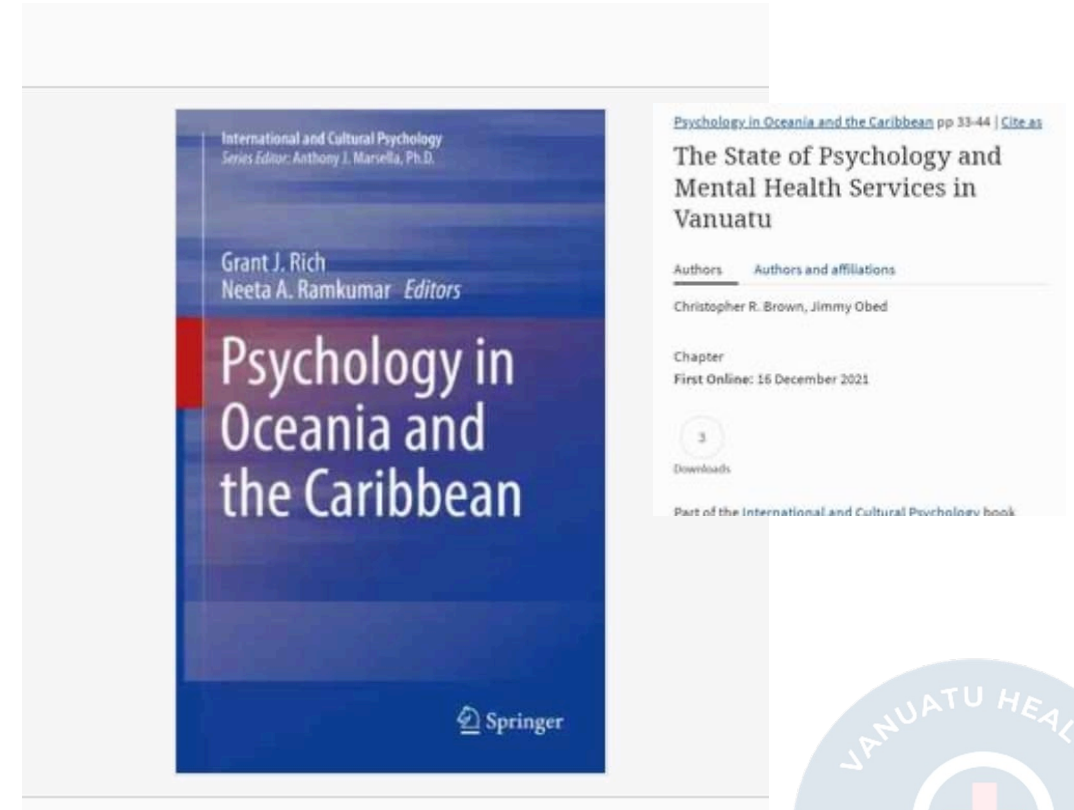
PSYCHOLOGY IN VANUATU

- Since that review
 - No systematic attempt to understand Ni-Vanuatu psychology
 - No indigenous trained psychologists
 - No psychological or social work services
 - No in country tertiary education in psychology



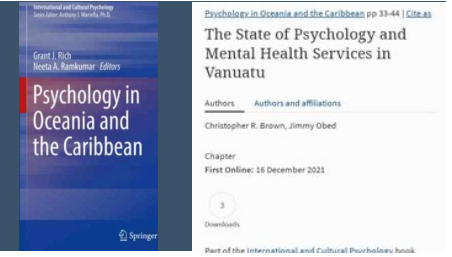
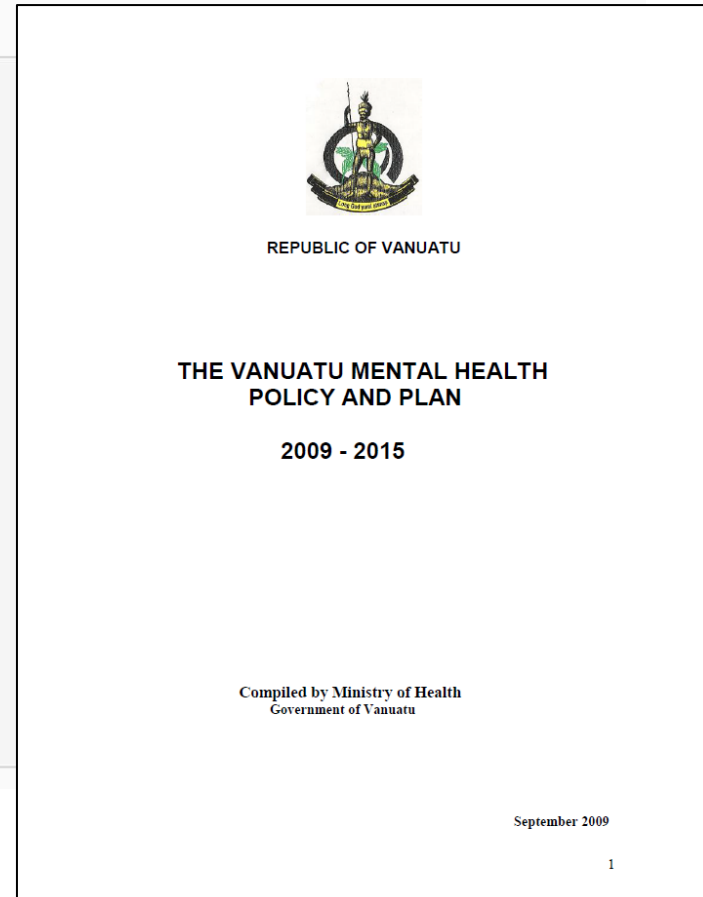
MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN VANUATU

- Situational analysis (2005) of mental health needs across the pacific
 - Mental health services effectively non existent
- Ministry of Health analysis of mental health services
 - Basic mental health services unavailable on most islands
 - No trained mental health nurses or doctors
 - No inpatient facilities in outlying islands
 - No community care facilities for people with mental disorders
 - No NGO's in the community dedicated to mental health
 - Heavy reliance on traditional or religious approaches to mental health care

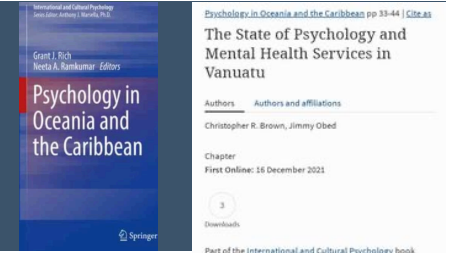


MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN VANUATU

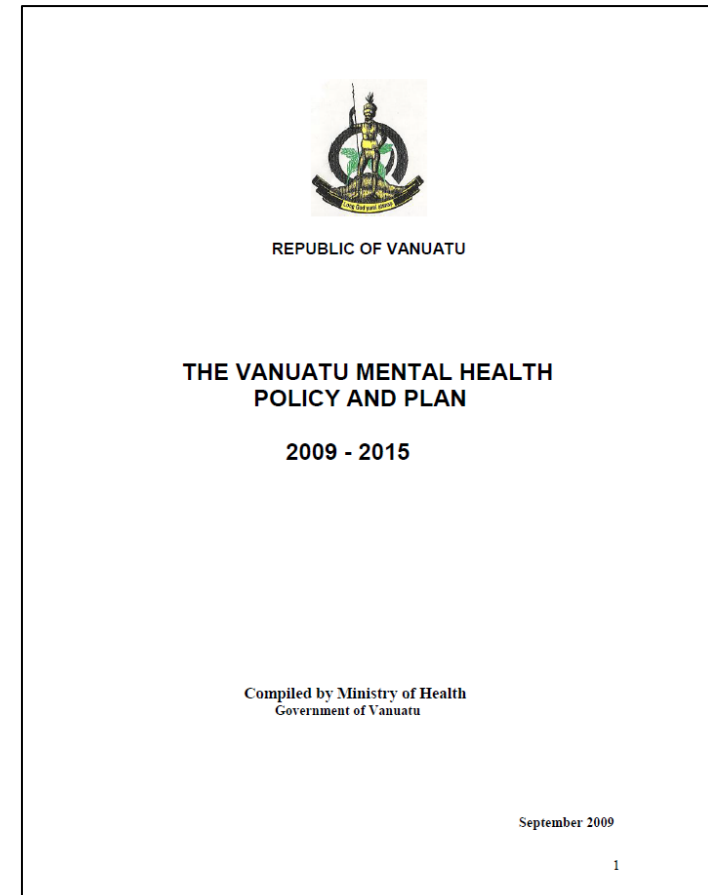
- This review led to the first mental health policy for Vanuatu
- The Mental health Policy (2009 – 2015) represented the first recognition of the need for mental health services
 - Aimed to modernise the approach to mental health care service delivery across the country



MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN VANUATU

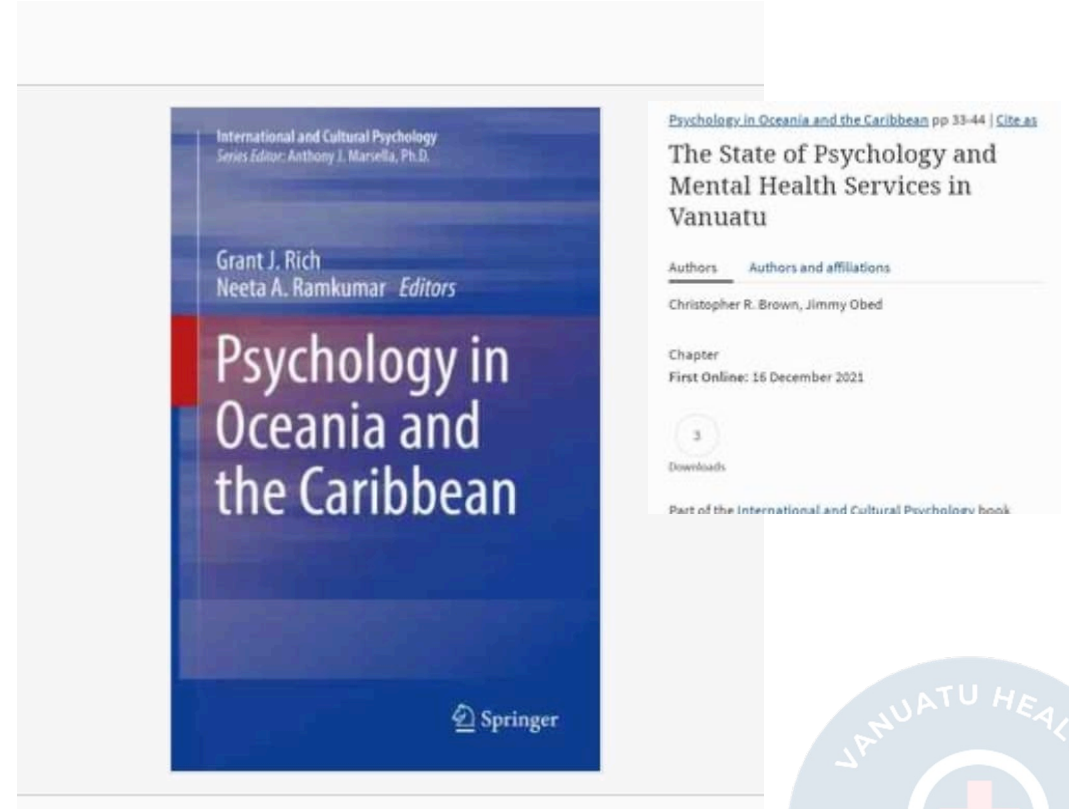
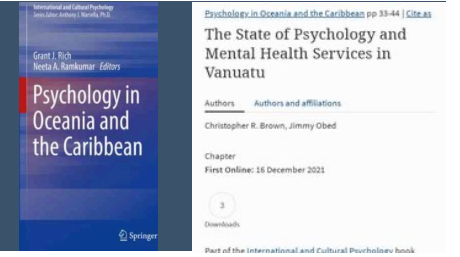


- Strategic plan (2009-2015)
 - Limited infrastructure
 - Lack of mental health professionals
 - Limited financial resources
 - Lack of services in primary health care



MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN VANUATU

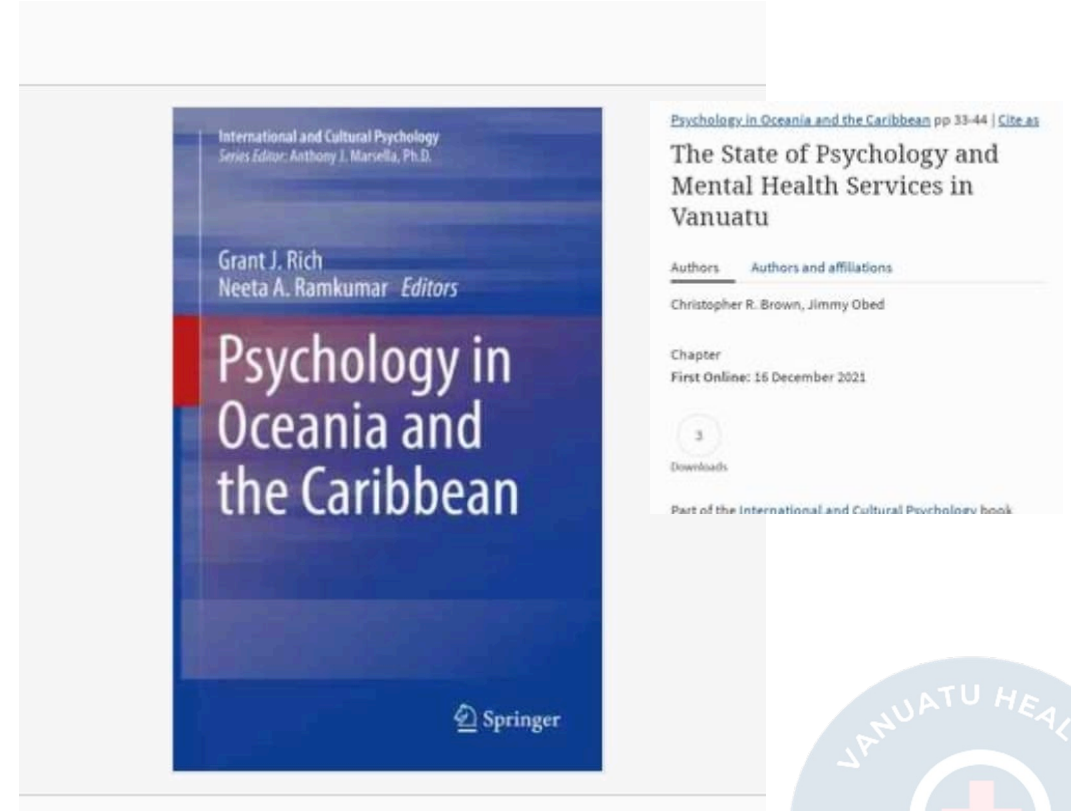
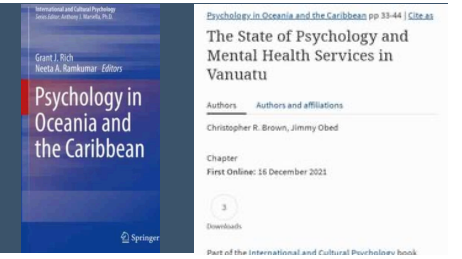
- In the decade that followed there have been significant improvements
 - Updated mental health legislation
 - Increases in human resources
 - Mental health services ant the primary health level
 - Recognition for the role of mental health care in the wake of natural disasters
- A commitment to creating a mentally healthy and literate community through access to equitable mental health care



MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN VANUATU

- The Mind Care Clinic*
 - Based at Vila Central Hospital
 - Deals with mentally ill patients from around the country
 - One fully qualified psychiatrist
 - Three qualified mental health nurses
 - Four dedicated beds
 - Visitation service
 - 520 consultations in 2020

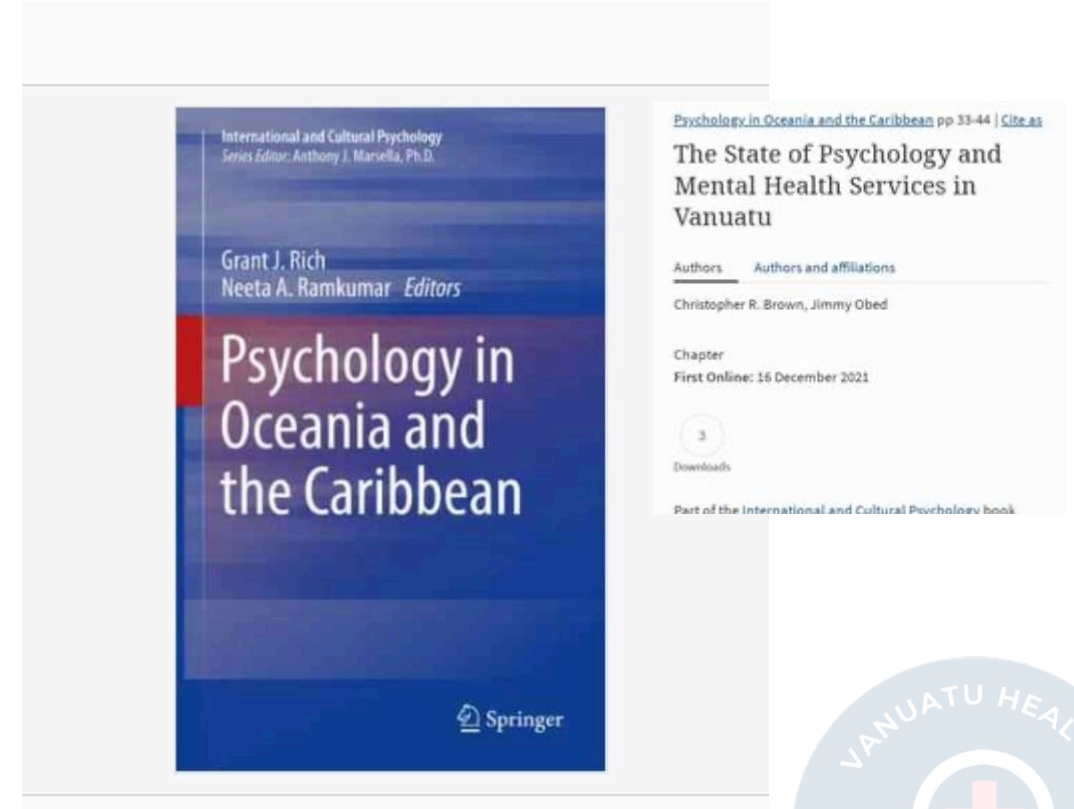
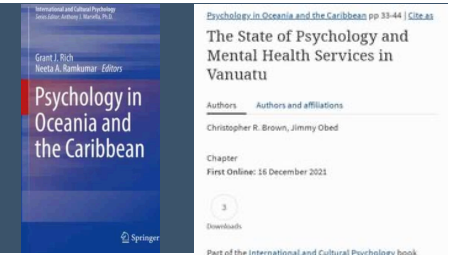
*details correct at the time of writing the book chapter



MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN VANUATU

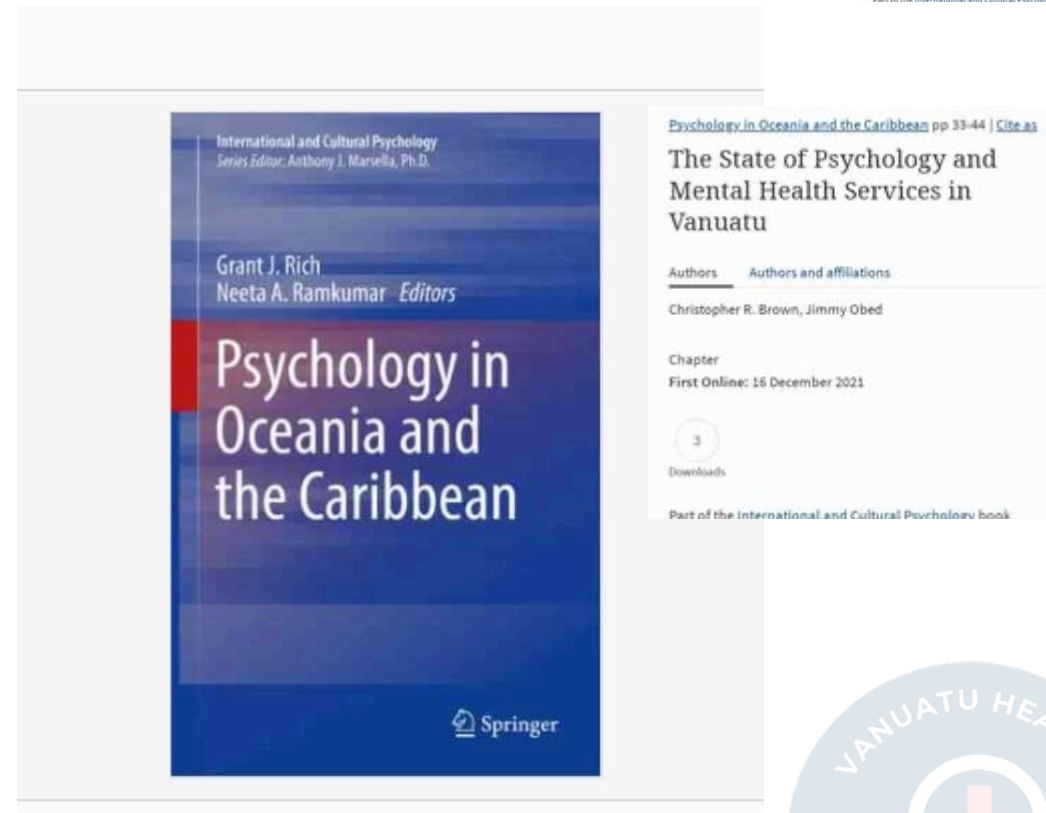
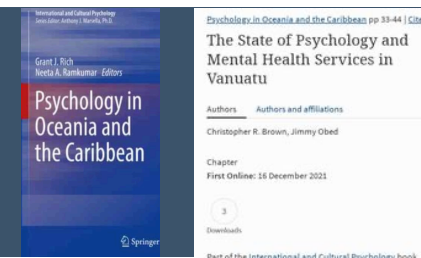
■ The Mind Care Clinic

- Pre-eminent organisation in the country
- Addressing the systemic challenges to the provision of mental health care a key priority
- Provides feedback to government regarding resources
- Developing human resources through training and internship programs
- Educating the community about mental health
- Increase psychological literacy



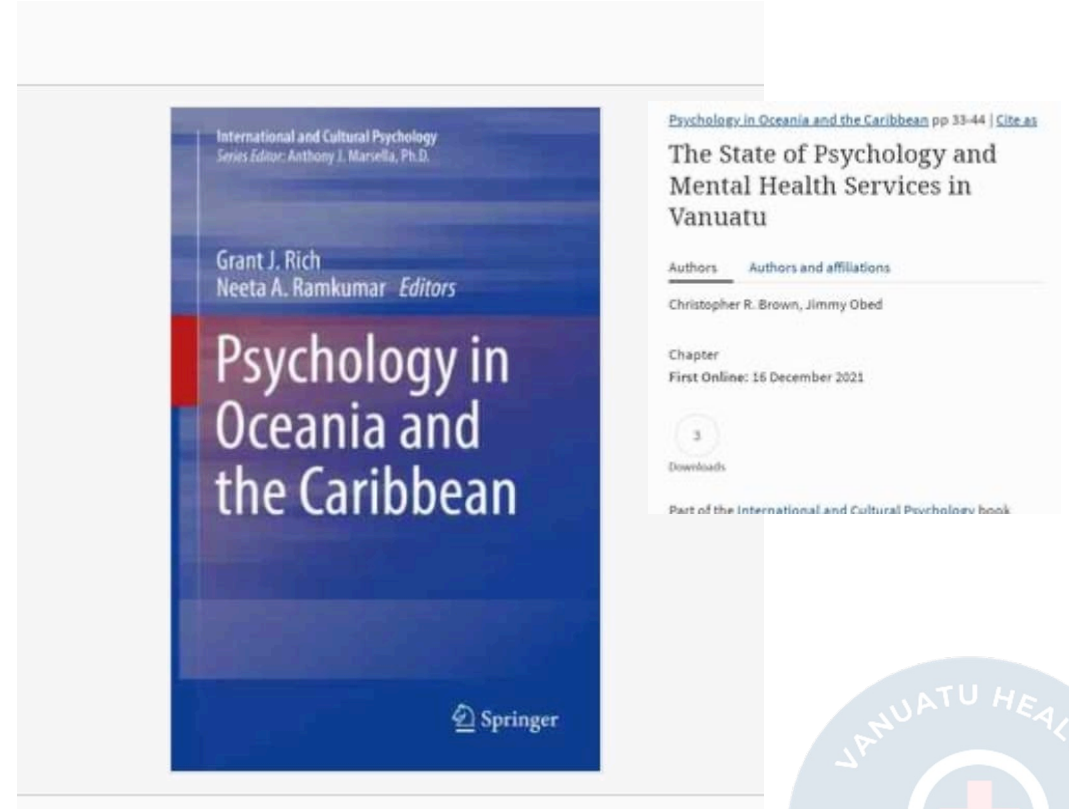
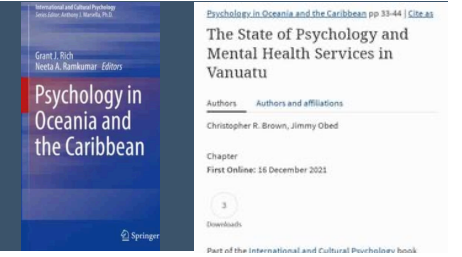
MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN VANUATU

- The Mind Care Clinic - Culturally relevant practices
 - Patients are unlikely to self-refer to psychiatric services
 - It often relies on family members
 - This is a significant undertaking
 - Often, only the most intransigent problems present for treatment



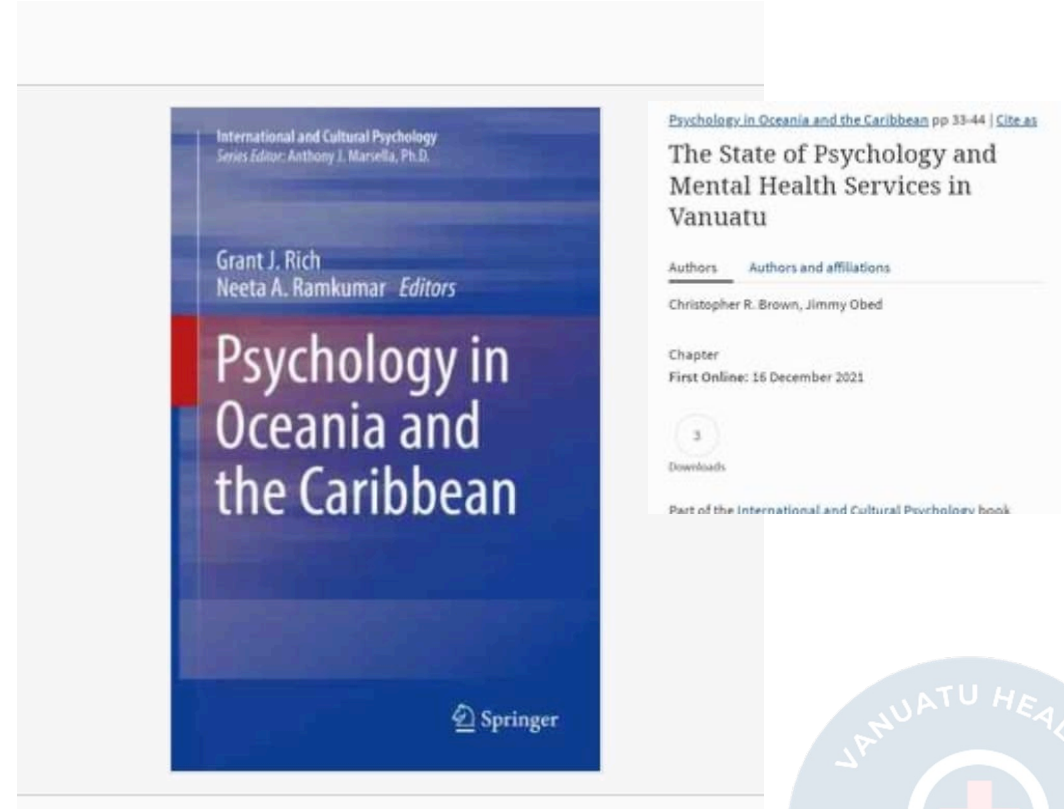
MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN VANUATU

- Patients being accompanied by family members provides an opportunity for practitioners at the Mind Care Clinic
 - Allowing patients to be attended to by family members
 - Makes patients more amenable to treatment
 - Allows family members to be educated
 - Improves care when patients return to their community
 - Allows family members to be cognisant of warning signs of relapse



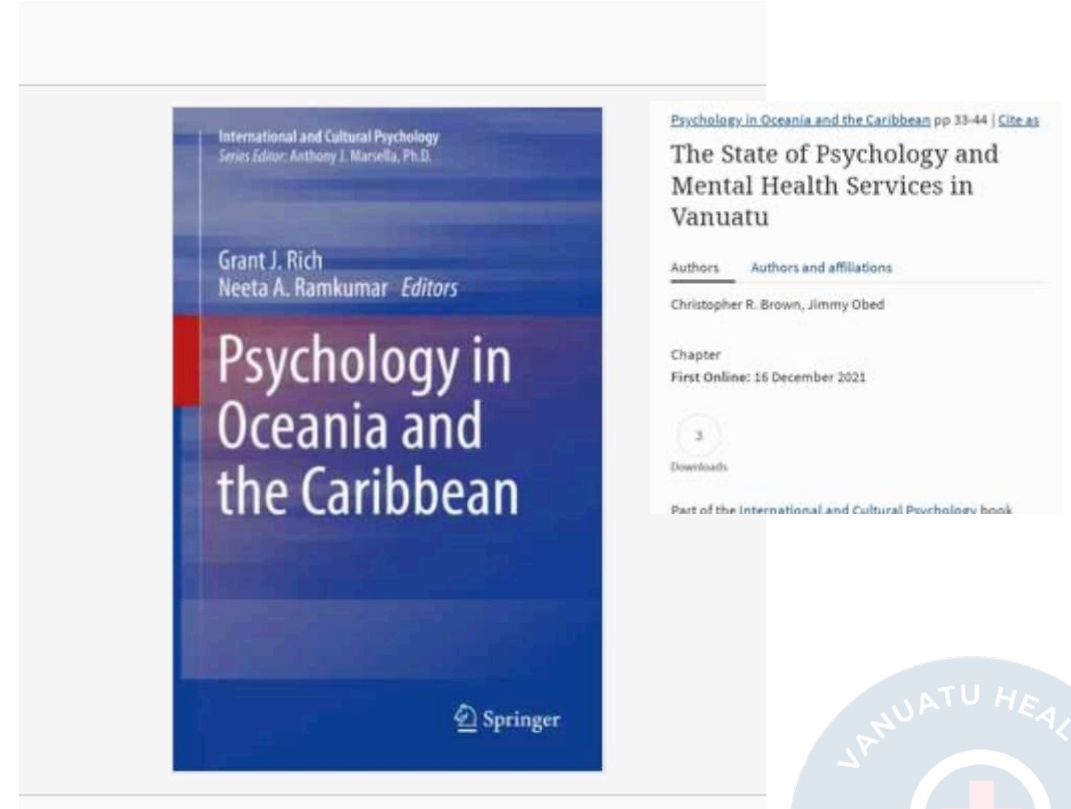
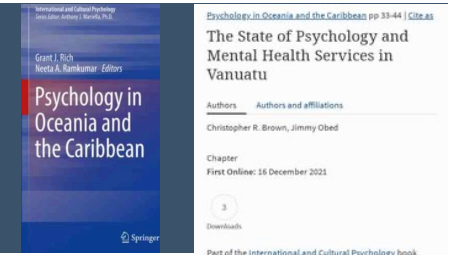
MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN VANUATU

- Post-disaster mental health care and mental health psychosocial support (MHPSS)
 - Vanuatu is one of the most at risk countries for natural disasters
- Following TC Pam
 - MOH, MCC and IsraAID provided MHPSS training across affected communities
 - Trained community leaders about the psychological impacts of natural disasters
 - Develop the capacity of communities to deal with disasters



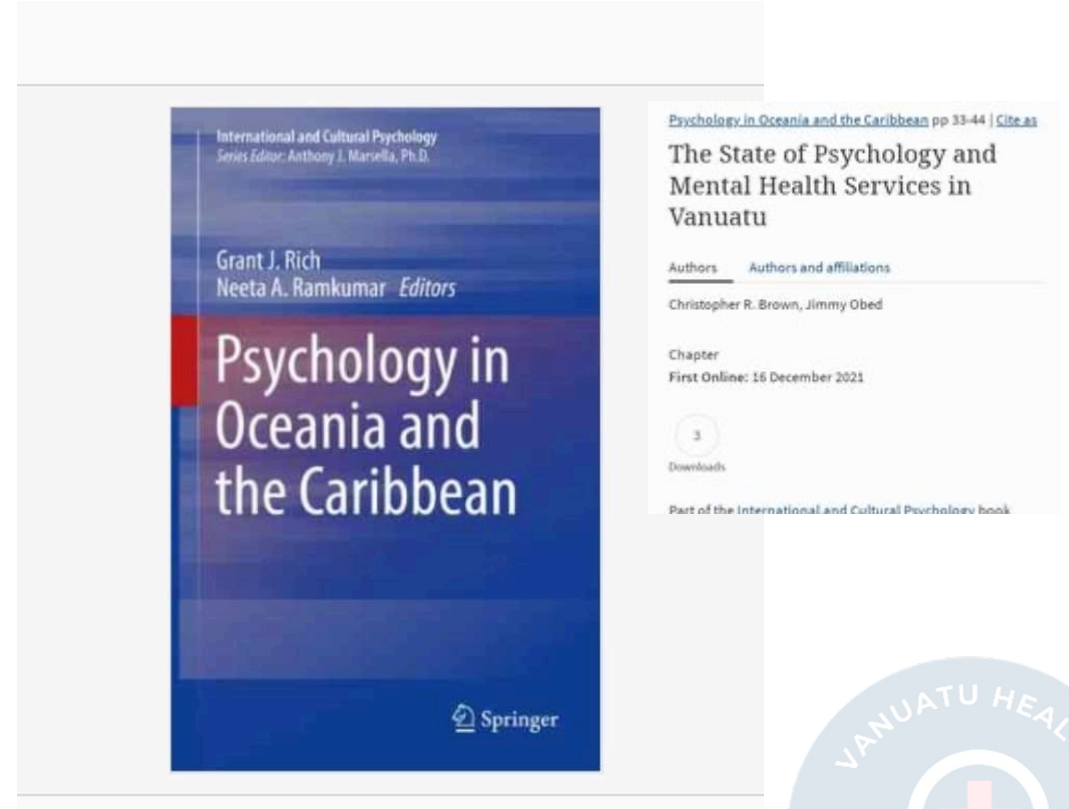
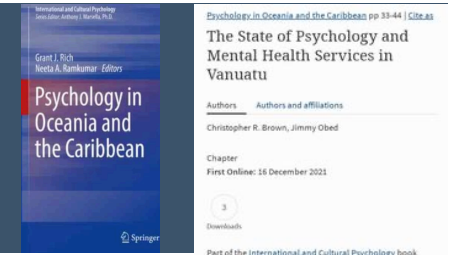
MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN VANUATU

- Similar MHPSS programs were implemented in response to the
 - Eruption of the Manaro Vouï Volcano in Ambae (2017)
 - TC Harold (2020)
- MHPSS training has become a commonly used tool to assist communities following natural disasters
 - Puts control over mental health needs into the hands of local communities
 - Educated communities about the services that are available

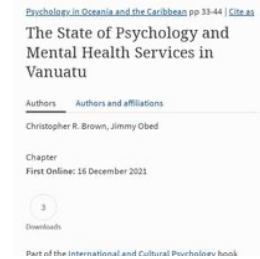
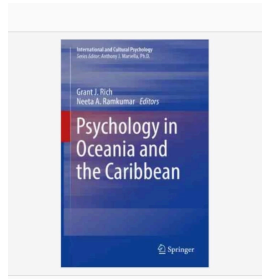


MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN VANUATU

- The last decade has seen significant advances in understanding the need for mental health care in Vanuatu
- This has produced significant improvements in the provision of mental health services across the country
- It is hoped that, by continuing to focus on the need for mental health care and the continued development of mental health care services, Vanuatu will become a psychologically literate and mentally healthy country, which will allow it to deal with the many future challenges it will face



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