



"Evidence to Impact"

VANUATU HEALTH RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM REPORT

Medical + Public Health + Nursing

23-24 September 2021
Holiday Inn, Port Vila



Event Overview

On 23-24 September 2021, the 2nd Vanuatu Health Research Symposium was held at Holiday Inn in Port Vila.

The Symposium Organising Committee was chaired by Dr Vincent Atua and Dr Lawrence Boe (on behalf of the Vanuatu Medical and Dental Association).

A symposium organising committee comprised of Dr Matthew Cornish (private physician), Dr Tessa Knox (WHO), Yohann Lemonnier (VHP) and Dr Caroline van Gemert (VHP).

The program is presented in the appendix of this report. The Symposium included a total of 36 presentation including 25 oral presentations and 11 posters.

Ten presenters won awards including

- Best presentation with a provincial focus: Hillary Toloka
- Best presentation with a national focus: Sael Fred
- Best presentation from an early career researcher: Aleesha Kalulu
- Best presentation from a senior researcher: Sereana Natuman
- Best nurse-led presentation: Lawrence Hinge
- Best clinical presentation: Dr Margaret Lehi
- Best public health presentation: Lekon Tagavi
- Best poster presentation: Dr Crystal Garae
- Best overall presentation: Dr Annette Garae
- Judges choice: Joanne Mariasua

Financial and technical support for the Symposium was provided by:

- Vanuatu Ministry of Health
- Vanuatu Medical and Dental Association
- Australian Aid
- New Zealand Aid Programme
- Pasifika Medical Association Group
- Vanuatu Health Program
- World Health Organization

Key recommendations

Key recommendations from the Symposium include:

- It is recommended that the Vanuatu Health Research Symposium is held on an annual basis
- It is recommended that the Vanuatu Health Research Symposium is adopted as a key Ministry of Health activity and that the coordination and implementation is led by the Ministry of Health and that conference organisation and administrative support is obtained
- It is recommended research skills and capacity building is strengthened and integrated with conference planning in future years
- It is recommended that future Vanuatu Health Research Symposiums continue to include both national and provincial representation from across the Ministry of Health including medical, nursing, allied health and public health areas

Symposium program

Day 1 Program: 23 September, 2021

7:00am * Prayer breakfast at Holiday Inn lobby (1000 vatu per person)

8:00am * Registrations open (collect lunch vouchers and sign in)

Opening and welcome * Dr Vincent Atua

8:30am - 8:35am * Opening Prayer

8:35am - 8:50am * Australian High Commission Representative speech

8:50am - 9:00am * Director Sereana Natuman * Opening Address

9:00am - 9:30am * Dr Mark Turnbull * *The doctor-patient relationship: exactly how influential are doctors in the lives of their patients*

9:30am - 9:45am * Wendy Williams * *Research process in Vanuatu*

9:45am - 10:00am * Dr Eunyoung Ko * *Partner support for research in Vanuatu*

Refreshment break

Session 1: Emergency medicine * Moderator: Dr Roderick Mera

10:30 - 10:45am * Hillary Toloka * *Patients' satisfaction of the care provided at the Emergency Department and Outpatient Department at Vila Central Hospital, Vanuatu*

10:45 - 11:00am * Dr Vega Kauh * *Electronic data registry to help inform the Emergency Department on key performance indicators*

11:15am - 11:30am * Dr Ryan Bryan Kalsakau * *Clinical audit of nebulizer use at NPH ED*

11:30am - 11:45am * Lawrence Hinge * *Effectiveness of community mental health home visit in reducing inpatient admission of mentally ill patients: a look at Vila Central Hospital's experience from 2012 to 2021*

Lunch break (Buffet lunch for registrants with vouchers only)

1:00pm - 1:30pm * Poster viewing

Session 2: Health Systems * Moderator: Dr Lawrence Boe

1:30pm - 1:45pm * Dr Basil Leodoro * *Deploying telemedicine in capacity constrained contexts: lessons from the Vanuatu Inter-island Telemedicine and Learning Project*

1:45pm - 2:00pm * Dr Mackenzie Sitobata * *Work challenges and opportunities faced by medical intern doctors in Vanuatu: A qualitative study*

2:15pm - 2:30pm * Sharin Vile * *Comparative analysis of provincial Health Emergency Structures throughout Vanuatu*

2:45pm - 3:00pm * Dr Sereana Natuman * *Hepatitis B the Vanuatu Story*

Refreshment break

Session 3: COVID-19 * Moderator: Ms Wendy Williams

3:30pm - 3:45pm * Melissa Binihi * *Understanding key COVID-19 health messages and review how and from who communities are receiving and accessing information about COVID-19*

3:45pm - 4:00pm * Aleesha Kalulu * *COVID-19 vaccine safety surveillance in Vanuatu in the first three months of implementation, 2021*

4:00pm - 4:15pm * Alexandre Pheu * *COVID-19 vaccination hesitancy in health care workers at Vila Central Hospital*

4:15pm - 4:30pm * Debbie Fred * *Improving reporting rates of hospitalized pneumonia cases in Vanuatu: An evaluation study*

5:00pm * Dr Lawrence Boe * VMDA Annual General Meeting

6pm * VMDA dinner at Rossi Restaurant (Ticketed event: 2000 vatu)

Day 2 Program: 24 September, 2021

Session 4: Maternal and Child Health * Moderator: Dr Crystal Garae

8:30am - 8:45am * Dr Annette Garae * *LBW Follow-up*

8:45am - 9:00am * Dr Margaret Lehi * *A retrospective study of diabetes in pregnancy at Vila Central Hospital, Vanuatu from January 1st 2014 to December 31st 2018*

9:00am - 9:15am * Leiwaku Noah * *First 1000 days End line survey results*

9:15am - 9:30am * Dr Matthew Cornish * *Malnutrition in remote Vanuatu: cyclone response survey*

9:30am - 9:45am * Dr Walesi Valeria Natuman * *A critical evaluation of rheumatic heart disease registration process after school screening program: a retrospective study of class 6 Students In Central Division of Fiji (via teleconference)*

Refreshment break

Session 5: Non-Communicable Diseases * Moderator: Dr Basil Leodoro

10:30am - 10:45am * Dr Thompson Lango * *10 Years of amputations In Santo: should the first cut be the deepest?*

10:45am - 11:00am * Andrew Kepoue * *Expanding NCD services to remote population of Vanuatu through mass screening and referral*

11:15am - 11:30am * Florita Toa * *Survival rate of proliferative diabetic retinopathy (PDR) patients undergoing laser treatment at Pacific Eye Institute, Suva, Fiji, from 2012 to 2017 (via teleconference)*

11:45am - 12:00pm * Saël Fred * *Prevalence and impacts of disability on Primary Health Care service delivery, management and utilisation in Vanuatu*

Lunch break (Buffet lunch for registrants with vouchers only)

1:00pm - 1:30pm * Poster viewing

Session 6: Infectious Diseases * Moderator: Dr Minado Paul

2:00pm - 2:15pm * Joanne Mariasua * *Review of outbreak thresholds of infectious diseases from the Syndromic Surveillance Database in Vanuatu from 2018-2021*

2:15pm - 2:30pm * Lekon Tagavi * *Deployment of Wolbachia-infected mosquitoes in Port Vila to reduce dengue*

2:30pm - 2:45pm * Wesley Donald * *Vanuatu roadmap to malaria elimination in the Pacific Region*

2:45pm - 3:00pm * Lana Elliott * *Access to and use of mosquito bed nets for malaria prevention in Vanuatu (via teleconference)*

Refreshment break

Consultation and wrap-up * Dr Basil Leodoro

3:30pm - 3:45pm * Dr Caroline van Gemert * *Taking the next steps to publication*

3:45pm - 4:00pm * Dr Philippe Guyant * *Development of a prioritised health research agenda for Vanuatu*

4:00pm - 4:15pm * Dr Matthew Cornish * *Summary of Symposium outcomes and recommendations*

4:15pm - 4:30pm * Dr Vincent Atua * *Closing remarks and vote of thanks*

4:30pm - 4:35pm * Closing prayer

6pm * Symposium dinner at Holiday Inn Farae (Formal ticketed event: 5000 vatu)

Poster Program

Dr Vincent Atua * Admission Trends from Port Vila Central Hospital Emergency Department for 2020: A retrospective data analysis

Emily Deed * Vanuatu Health Facility Assessment: Sexual and reproductive health services for adolescents and youth

Emily Deed * Vanuatu Health Facility Assessment: Sexual and gender-based violence services

Dr Crystal Garae * Postmortem detection of SARS-CoV-2 after exposure to seawater

Edna Iavro * Prevalence of scabies in Sanma Province, Vanuatu

Dr Eunoung Ko * Resources available to support health research in Vanuatu

Dr Basil Leodoro * Intimate partner violence and health outcomes experienced by women who are pregnant: a cross-sectional survey in Sanma Province, Vanuatu

Fasih Taleo * Integrated NTD MDA with NCD Screening on Tanna and Efate island

Dr Caroline van Gemert * Triple elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, syphilis and hepatitis B in the Pacific Islands

Wendy Williams * Comparison of strategies for daily surveillance for symptom development among international travellers entering Vanuatu requiring quarantine, Oct to Dec 2020

Awards

Best overall poster presentation

Best overall oral presentation

Best clinical presentation (oral or poster)

Best nurse-led research presentation (oral or poster)

Best public health research presentation (oral or poster)

Best presentation by an early-career researcher (oral or poster)

Best presentation by a senior researcher (oral or poster)

Best presentation with a provincial focus (oral or poster)

Best presentation with a national focus (oral or poster)

Symposium Committee Judges Choice

Symposium reflections

	What went well	What went less well	What should we do differently next year
<i>Executive engagement</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MOH Executive approved conference • Director Sereana attended the whole symposium • DPPCS and DPH attended final sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minister for Health not available for launch of symposium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with MOH Executive earlier to ensure they understand the broader implication and benefits of the symposium including MOH leadership, team building, learning and development
<i>Event coordination</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team was available • Team put in a lot of effort 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal input from the Ministry of Health for event coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage Ministry of Health to take the lead • Engage technical advisors for advice on programming rather than event coordination
<i>Abstract submission and review</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online submission • Template to guide people • Looks more professional • Review process was all online and electronic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional guidance required to ensure abstracts structured the same way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call for abstracts to be advertised with greater lead time
<i>Pre-conference workshops</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three workshops were held (abstracts, posters and presentations) and were well received 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not enough advance notice was given 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise and advertise sessions well in advance
<i>Presentations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Template used and they looked professional • Most presentations provided in advance • Most presentations were in Bislama which increased the confidence of presenters • Pre-symposium workshop strengthened presentations • Tessa did a great job fixing IT issues on the day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some presentations went over-time • Not all presentations were presenting research (vs. program activities) • Some presenters were unprepared • IT wasn't engaged in advance to provide technical support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure stricter review of presentations • Call for abstracts earlier • Advise abstract outcome earlier • Ensure presenters keep to time • Retain pre-symposium workshop to prepare presenters • MOH IT should be engaged earlier to provide support throughout conference
<i>Virtual participation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 10 people were regularly online watching presentations from within Vanuatu and further (Fiji, Australia) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Didn't provide advance notice on how to watch conference • Feedback received that audio was difficult when watching online 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outsource AV services to ensure high quality virtual participation including Q&A
<i>Budget and funding</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The event went ahead despite last minute 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not enough support for administration and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require administrative support to ensure

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	funding issues	budgeting in advance and during symposium	<p>symposium is appropriately budgeted for in advance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure funding is obtained for the estimated budget in advance • Consider including registration fees
<i>Posters</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well presented • Scheduled poster viewing times were well attended 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some posters were submitted late • First print run was incorrect • Poster paper not available so fabric posters were printed at higher cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase number of posters
<i>Communications</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on FaceBook was well received from participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not enough information about the event was provided to participants in advance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with MOH risk communications team and Executive in advance to promote event
<i>Registrations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VMDA had team members at registration desk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VMDA team members missed many sessions due to being at registration desk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registrations in advance or limit to out-of-session only
<i>Provincial representation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some provincial representation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited participation from some provinces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased focus on provinces • Increased provincial representation • Increased funding to bring in provincial officers • Consider holding symposium in other cities to increase provincial engagement
<i>Evaluation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal feedback obtained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation not conducted during the Symposium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure Symposium is evaluated at time of event
<i>Inclusivity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One presentation focused on people living with a disability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Venue not accessible for disabled people • Subtitles were not used for hearing impaired people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure disability-friendly venue • Ensure subtitles used for hearing impaired people • Encourage abstracts from and focused on people living with a disability • Include VSPD as a partner in the organization of the symposium
<i>Transportation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation was not provided or offered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure transportation to event is provided for future symposium to ensure safety for participants

