



Pacific news

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NZSA Global Health Committee

Support for overseas training and development, especially in the Pacific region, is a key focus of the NZSA's Global Health Committee (previously known as the NZSA Overseas Aid Sub-Committee). Dr James Dalby-Ball writes about the breadth of the Committee's work and opportunities for members to engage with supporting the Pacific.

Role and key aims of the GHC

Since 2007, the GHC has facilitated the NZSA's commitment to supporting the development of anaesthesia in the Pacific region by enabling the NZSA to prioritise and coordinate these activities.

With an increased global focus on anaesthesia by many organisations, the NZSA has decided to change the name of the subcommittee to the NZSA Global Health Committee. This more accurately reflects our activities and aligns with the World Health Organisation's aims of ensuring safe surgery and anaesthesia as part of Universal Health Care.

Within Australasia, the NZSA GHC works with two other committees: the Overseas Development and Education Committee (ODEC) of the Australian Society of Anaesthetists (ASA) and the ANZCA Global Development Committee (previously the Overseas Aid Committee). Together, these organisations work with the wider Pacific to coordinate training and engagement with the global anaesthesia community.

The NZSA GHC's focus is on the South West Pacific area – our local neighbourhood. Although there are many ongoing projects, these fall into two main categories – supporting training within the Pacific and facilitating opportunities for anaesthetists in the Pacific to develop their skills and engage with other colleagues.



PSA Refresher Course 2019

Supporting Training

Samoa MMED Programme

The NZSA GHC is now jointly (with the ASA) funding and supporting a Pacific trainee to undertake the Masters Training Programme. Clinical anaesthesia training commences in a trainee's native country with the final requirements for the programme taking place in Fiji through the Fiji National University. Both NZSA and ASA are supporting the current candidate Dr Cecilia Vaai-Bartley with the annual training fee. She, as well as other trainees in the Pacific, are facing many challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The NZSA and ASA are working together with the Samoan Ministry of Health to create a sustainable anaesthesia workforce in Samoa. This type of activity presents many challenges and is being led by Committee member Dr Alan Goodey.

Locum support

The annual Pacific Society of Anaesthetists (PSA) Refresher Course is the only opportunity for many anaesthetists in the Pacific to meet face-to-face. The NZSA GHC organises locum cover for doctors who would otherwise be unable to attend. In 2019 we provided the largest ever contingent of NZSA locums, which for the first time included Provisional Fellows from New Zealand, working under the oversight of NZ SMOs in Suva, Fiji. Unfortunately, the 2020 PSA Refresher Course was cancelled due to COVID-19, however we hope to provide this service again in 2021.

Outside of the PSA Refresher Course, we have also been approached to provide locum cover for Samoa and the Cook Islands to support colleagues who are overworked and have no chance of relief otherwise. We are waiting for border restrictions to ease before committing to this request.

The new ASMS MECA clause 36 makes specific allowance for NZ members to spend time supporting these activities as part of annual or sabbatical CME allowances.

Pacific trainees and NZ rotations

The Committee supports Pacific trainees to come to New Zealand for work experience and training (Hawkes Bay and Christchurch rotations). The Pacific trainees who have been selected to come to New Zealand in 2021 are from Vanuatu and the Cook Islands, with the current Christchurch-based anaesthetist returning to Fiji where she plans to develop the pain service in Suva. Previous trainees who have undertaken these training rotations have become leaders in their anaesthesia communities and maintained strong links with their NZ training hospitals.

We also support Pacific trainees in NZ to attend EMAC in Wellington (Wellington Hospital provides a 50% discount of the registration fee, the NZSA contributes \$1000 towards flights and accommodation and Hawkes Bay DHB pays the remaining registration and other costs).

Engagement opportunities for NZ trainees

With growing interest amongst trainees to become involved in supporting initiatives in the Pacific, the committee has recently appointed a trainee representative (Dominic Johnpillai).

The NZSA has always encouraged trainees to become involved and members can apply for the annual Overseas Aid Trainee Grant, which goes towards paying the costs of attending the PSA's Annual Refresher Course. It provides an opportunity to gain perspective on anaesthesia services in the Pacific, to network with anaesthesia colleagues in the Pacific and to assist with the meeting, if required. While we have been unable to offer the grant to trainees this year, we hope to do so in 2021.



Drs James Dalby-Ball, Richard Collins, Wei-Lyn, Melvin Chong, Jane Carter and Lisa Barnett with Dr Luke Nasedera (HOD Colonial War Memorial Hospital, Fiji, second from left) and Fiji National University trainees.

Supporting Anaesthesia Practice

COVID-19 support for the Pacific

We have been in regular contact with the PSA and other regional organisations, sharing information and offering support during the COVID-19 pandemic. Earlier this year, Dr Ted Hughes was based in the Cook Islands directly supporting their efforts.

Practical assistance was also offered via the donation of Lifebox Pulse Oximeter units. NZSA joined with the ASA and ANZCA, providing funds for 150 additional units, which were delivered across the Pacific Islands, Papua New Guinea, Laos and Micronesia. These units are very useful in guiding treatment of COVID-related respiratory illness in settings where ventilators are a very limited resource.

Role within the World Federation of Societies of Anaesthesiologists

The NZSA is an associate member of the WFSA and sponsors a Pacific anaesthetist to attend the annual WFSA World Congress. In addition, Indu Kapoor (Chair of GHC) has been appointed to the WFSA Paediatric Anaesthesia Committee.

Future activities

Through the support offered by the NZSA and generous donations from the Hugh Spencer Education Fund, the GHC is actively planning future activities.

The pandemic has placed many of the routine activities on hold however on a more positive note, it has given us time to reflect on how internet-based education/support could be developed. Over the next year we hope to support the PSA to deliver the 2021 Refresher Course, to develop training opportunities within the Pacific and to engage more NZSA members to support our neighbours.

We have our own webpage on the NZSA website and post regular updates on our work activities and engagement opportunities.

Further reading

Dr Alan Goodey, member of the NZSA GHC, has written a comprehensive article about the Lancet Commission's ambitious goals for 2030, which include a minimum of 80% coverage of essential surgical and anaesthesia services per country. A second indicator which is more easily measured but still extremely challenging is 100% of countries having a minimum of 20 anaesthesia physicians per 100,000 population and equal numbers of surgeons and obstetricians. How can the NZSA and its members help to achieve these goals in the Pacific? Read his article on our website: <https://anaesthesia.nz/community/global-health-committee/>

Committee members

Indu Kapoor (Chair), Wayne Morris, James Dalby-Ball (new member, Nov 2019), Alastair Mark, Petra Linden-Ross (new member, August 2019), Alan Goodey, Ted Hughes, Maurice Lee, and Dominic Johnpillai (trainee representative)

