Post-Graduate Surgical Training in Fiji- Where to From Here?

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Post Graduate Surgical Training: ‘Outline’

1. Background
2. Training
3. HR Development & Service Delivery
4. Challenges
5. Mentoring
6. Advocacy
7. Recommendations
8. Conclusions

2000-2010: ‘10 years planning’
Times are changing!
1. Background: History of Post-graduate Surgical Training

- Central Medical School-Fiji: Established in 1885\(^1\).
- MBBS-1987...Coup d'état
- PCP/MBBS-1991
- Endorsed by the Fiji Government in 1994- as part of the FSM Development Plan
- ‘Yanuca island accord’: 1995\(^2\)
- Recommendation allowed the introduction and establishment of the post-graduate diploma and master’s programme in Medicine, Surgery, Anaesthesia, Paediatrics, Obstetrics and Gynaecology-1996.
- Postgraduate training-1998
- FSM, now CMNHS being part of the FNU since 2010 but maintaining a local curriculum relevant to the Pacific island countries.
1. Background: Post-graduate Surgery

- Postgraduate training at FSM:
  1. Earlier developed an informal postgraduate teaching and course development in 1996, prior to its establishment in 1998

- The guiding principles:
  1. Part of the training is taught through distance learning which can be done at their home countries
  2. To be case based and problem solving so a large component is self-directed learning
  3. A public health component and a completion of a research study
2. Training

Tavarua Hand Workshop
2. Post-graduate Surgical Training

- Various selection process
- 1-year post-graduate diploma in surgery of which the first 6 months was done in their respective Pacific island countries.
* Case Discussions and other surgical activities
* RACS Surgical Trainees Educational Modules (STEM) modules
* Successfully completed and attainment of at least a B+ to proceed to the Master of Medicine Programme
- Exit masters final examination in the 3rd year
- Successfully complete a research project in the 4th year to graduate with the Master of Medicine degree
- Encouraged to do further 2 or more years of sub-specialized training*
2. Training: ‘The first graduands’

Under the supervision of Ass. Professor Eddie McCaig, the first post-graduate diploma in Surgery (PG Dip Surg) were:

1. Sitiveni Vudiniabola (Fiji),
2. Santos Wari (Vanuatu),
3. Chester Kuma (Solomon)
4. Faka’osi Pifeleti (Tonga),
5. Kamlesh Kumar (Fiji),
6. Kelemedi Uluitoga (Fiji)
7. Sainimere Matararaba (Fiji)
2. Training: “The Success”

- Surgical postgraduate training has maintained a high standard.
- It has not eliminated the failure rate!
- It won’t stop those young surgical trainees who would like to travel and migrate for various reasons.
- Our health system will also need to adjust their policies to reduce the frustrations of trained surgeons and to have a clear and predictable career progression to retain these surgeons in the Pacific.
2. Training: “The Success”
3. HR Development & Service Delivery

- **Fiji**: Returning from their respective training abroad and are leading the way forward in surgery, now recently seen ‘sub-specialists’ in:
  - *Neurosurgery (1)*
  - *Plastic (1)*
  - *Urology (2)*
  - *Orthopaedics (2 +1)*
  - *Paediatric Surgery (1 +1)*
  - *General Surgery (3 +1)*
3. HR Development and Service Delivery - Fiji

- 2 General Surgeons
- 1 Orthopaedic Surgeon
- 1 Paediatric/General Surgeon
- 1 Neurosurgeon
- 1 Urologist
- 1 Plastic Surgeon
- 1 ENT Surgeon
- 2 Orthopaedic Surgeons
3. HR Development & Service Delivery

• Fiji surgeons currently abroad:

* Orthopaedic (1)
* Plastic (1)
* Paediatric Surgery (2)
* General Surgery (2)
4. Challenges

- College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Science (CMNHS) of the FNU since January 2010

- Post-graduate surgical training came to an abrupt suspension in 2014.
  * Stringent requirements of the FNU and the Higher Education Commission in Fiji
  * Motives behind the suspension of this successful training?
4. Challenges

- Post-graduate surgical training to resume in Fiji under the CMNHS (FNU):
  * A new surgical curriculum
  * Group of surgeons reformat the previous curriculum and to develop a new surgical programme

- This restructure & further developments allowed training to resume in January 2015
  * Under the supervision of some energetic and skillful young surgeons.
5. Mentoring

- Associate Professor Eddie McCaig
  * First Pacific Island surgeon to be awarded the ESR Hughes award-
  presented to him in May of 2015 (RACS annual congress in Perth)
5. Mentoring

- **Dr Sitiveni Vudiniabola:** 1st graduand to become a senior Lecturer in Surgery from 1999-2013, now a full time private surgeon

- The new revised post-graduate curriculum in January 2015: Introduction of new and young surgical supervisors
  * Associate Professor Ifereimi Waqainabete
  * Assistant Associate Prof Bashrat Munshi
  * Associate Professor Eddie McCaig

- Honorary clinical lecturers: CWMH or Lautoka Hospital

- Formal assessment of the ‘quality of the trainees and the training’ during the assessment, review and examination process by an external examiners from the RACS.
5. Mentoring
6. Advocacy

- College of Medicine, nursing and Health Science (CMNHS) of Fiji National University-
  *Post-grad Dip in Surgery
  *Master of Medicine in Surgery
- Pacific Island Surgeons Association (PISA)
- Pasifika Medical Association (PMA)
- RACS-Honorary Members?
7. Future Recommendations

• RACS and Fiji (+/-Pacific) Surgeons:
  * Support ‘leave cover’ and assistance
  → Avoid burnout
  * Facilitate the training in Fiji when needed
  * Mentorship

• Continue to support those trainees who would like to do sub-specialised training overseas

• Ongoing Fiji MOH support
8. Conclusion

- Time for change: Trainees have become the current surgical leaders and clinical surgical supervisors.
  * Change of leadership
  * Keep progressing for the future of surgery in Fiji (& the Pacific).

- Challenges of maintaining a high standard and high quality of surgical training

- Continue supporting the current surgical supervisors
Acknowledge our Seniors - Fiji
References

1. Cama JK, Cama AT, Qovu J. Perspective from the Pioneers of the “Problem-Based Learning” and a Tribute to the Late Dr Jimione Samisoni: the Guinea Pigs. Pacific Health Dialog. Sept 2012, Vol 18. No.2. Pg 133-134

