

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

Mr Jitoko K. Cama  
Paediatric Surgeon/Paediatric Urologist  
Waikato Hospital  
New Zealand

# 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!



PISA Meeting 2010-Vanuatu



# 1. Background: History of Post-graduate Surgical Training

- Central Medical School-Fiji: Established in 1885<sup>1</sup>.
- 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<sup>2</sup>
- 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<sup>2</sup>
- 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<sup>3</sup>

## 2. Training



Tavarua Hand Workshop

## 2. Post-graduate Surgical Training

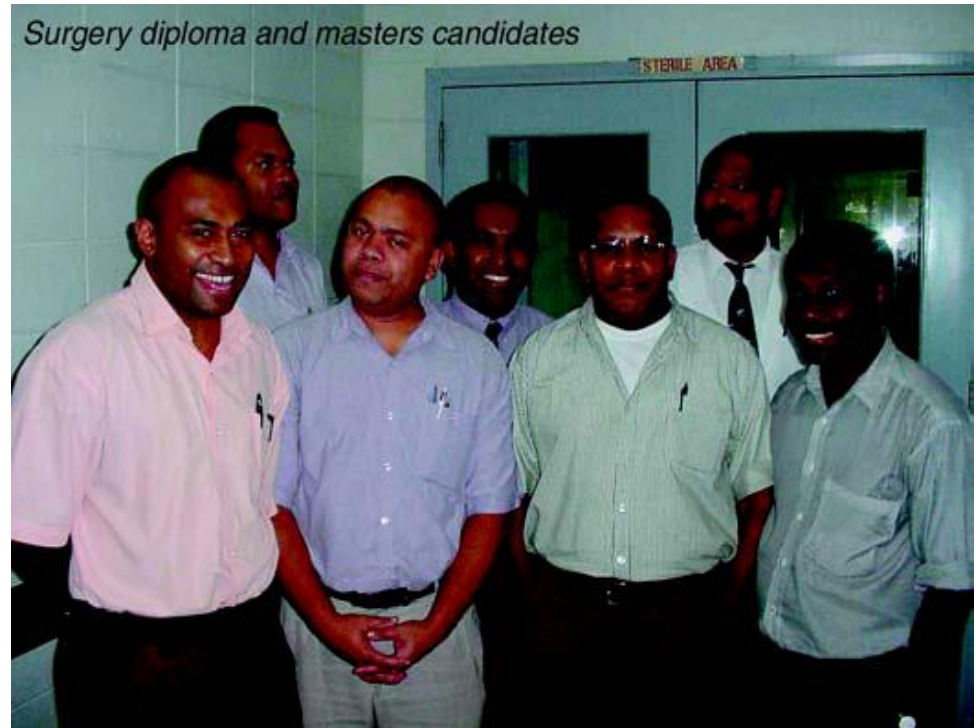
- Various selection process
- 1-year post-graduate diploma in surgery of which the first 6 months was done in their respective Pacific island countries.
  - \* Case Discussions and other surgical activities
  - \* RACS Surgical Trainees Educational Modules (STEM) modules
  - \* Successfully completed and attainment of at least a B+ to proceed to the Master of Medicine Programme
- Exit masters final examination in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year
- Successfully complete a research project in the 4<sup>th</sup> year to graduate with the Master of Medicine degree<sup>1</sup>
- 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<sup>4</sup>

## 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

2 General Surgeons

2 General Surgeons  
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:** 1<sup>st</sup> 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

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