

Virtual Pacific Research Symposium in Ear and Hearing Health

Wednesday 5th May, 2021 3pm to 5pm (New Zealand Time)

Zoom Link <https://auckland.zoom.us/j/98562277676?pwd=REgxcjFRTGVQamV4VkRhamxrVjhxdz09>

Passcode 459347

Time	Topic	Speaker
3.00pm	Welcome	
3.05pm	Pacific Community experiences during 2020	Dr Berlin Kafoa & Dr Silina Motofaga
3.20pm	Keynote Address: Prevalence of ear disease with associated hearing loss among a sample of primary school children in Tonga	Dr Sepiuta Lopati
3.50pm	ENT and Audiology Clinic developments in Samoa	Dr Sione Pifeleti
4.05pm	Identification of hearing losses in clients to Frank Hilton Organization, Fiji	Dr Suzanne Hopf & Sureni Pereni
4.20pm	Exploratory investigation into the hearing health status of Tokelauan adults in New Zealand	Latasi Koro
4.35pm	Audiology Services in Tonga – reflections, challenges, opportunities	Phillip Luey
4.50pm	Ear and Hearing Health in Young Children in Niue	Dr Elizabeth Holt
5.00pm	Conclusion and thanks	Dr Peter Thorne

Speaker Information

Dr Berlin Kafoa – Team Leader, Public Health, Pacific Community, Fiji

Dr Sepiuta Lopati – ENT Registrar, Ministry of Health, Tonga

Current Research Interests

Prevalence of ear disease with associated hearing loss among a sample of primary school children in Tonga. Compare levels of hearing pre- and post wax removal.

Research Findings to present

Wax was the most common ear problem found in 54.6% of the children followed by middle ear disease (12%). Wax was more common among children in urban primary school children while middle ear disease was commonly found among children in rural primary school children. Seven percent of children failed hearing test and middle ear disease was the most common cause followed by wax. The improvement in mean threshold among children with occluded wax after removal was 7 dBHL. Of the 15% of children with bilateral hearing loss due to occluded wax, there was 5% reduction in number of students post wax removal. Wax removal benefitted 30% and 35% of students with unilateral and bilateral hearing respectively.

Dr Sione Pifeleti – Acting Head of ENT & Audiology Department, Ministry of Health, Samoa

Current Research Interests

Public Health approach to ear and hearing care in Samoa.

Research Findings to present

Dr Pifeleti will present and update on the development of ENT and hearing care for Samoa.

Dr Suzanne C. Hopf - Lecturer of Speech-language pathology, Charles Sturt University, Australia

Current Research Interests

In association with the Frank Hilton Organization in Fiji, I am interested in researching the pathway from referral to discharge for Fijian children and young adults with developmental or acquired hearing loss.

Research findings to present

Early identification of hearing loss (HL) is critical to ensuring that children have the best opportunity to acquire communication and participate fully in family, academic, and future work life. Provision of timely and appropriate hearing and communication therapies in Fiji relies on a coordinated approach between hearing and communication experts across the country. This presentation uses file audit data to describe the prevalence and profiles of HL in clients referred to Frank Hilton Organization in Fiji between 2019 and 2020. Results indicate that, consistent with population estimates, annual in hospital neonatal testing identifies 1.75% of children with a hearing loss (screened: n=228; identified with HL: n=4). However, hearing screening of older children and young adults (age range: 0;9 – 24;0) at FHO outpatient and outreach clinics across Fiji identified 5.04% with significant HL in the same time period (screened: n=1191; identified with HL: n=60). Numbers suggest that young Fijians with HL (either developmental or acquired) are often not identified as requiring intervention until preschool age or older. Late identification has the potential to significantly reduce life-long educational, social, and occupational outcomes. Recommendations for improving early identification of, and interventions for, HL in Fiji are presented.

Latasi Koro – Audiologist, The University of Auckland, New Zealand

Current Research Interests

My current research interests are in access to and through audiological services for Pacific people at an individual level in my work as an Audiologist.

Research findings to present

The aim of my research was to carry out an exploratory investigation into the hearing health status of Tokelauan adults in New Zealand, and to explore how to best conduct health research with Tokelauan communities. A questionnaire collecting demographic and noise exposure, otoscopy, pure tone audiometry and tympanometry were carried out on 123 participants from Auckland and Porirua. The recruitment phase was the most challenging, guided by Te Vaka Atafaga which was consulted often and used to refine the recruitment methods as we went for more culturally safety, and so effectiveness. I will unpack this in the presentation. Findings were consistent with previous Pacific health reporting, indicating Tokelauan adults seem to have higher rates of hearing loss predominantly at a slight to mild extent. The average audiogram for younger adult participants also had more extensive loss than their 30- to 64-year-old counterparts. Considering this, further research needs to be repeated on a larger, more representative sample.

Phillip Luey – Audiologist, Tonga Ministry of Health

Research findings to present

I would like to present some personal reflections as the audiology services start to develop in Tonga, what are some challenges, and what are some possible opportunities.

Dr Elizabeth Holt – EMC Pacific Research Co-ordinator, The University of Auckland, New Zealand

Current research interests

My research interests are in public health research, ear and hearing health of Pacific children in Pacific Island countries and New Zealand, and the equitable provision of ear and hearing health care services.

Research findings to present

I will be presenting my PhD research findings which examined the ear and hearing health of children 5 years of age and under in Niue. Using three strands of data collection (clinical study, interviews and survey), the research showed that Niuean children in Niue have favourable ear and hearing health outcomes, particularly in comparison to other Pacific Island countries and Pacific children in New Zealand. Favourable environmental factors, accessible and responsive primary health care system and community factors contribute to these outcomes. A Pacific-centric ear and hearing health model (The Lili Ear and Hearing Health Model) is proposed from the research results and in consultation with key Niuean cultural advisors as a tool to understand the ear health of children in Niue.

Dr Peter Thorne – Director Eisdell Moore Centre for Hearing and Balance Research, New Zealand