Greetings, Talofa and Kia Orana

We have undertaken to keep in touch with the people, organisations and government departments with whom we have consulted as part of this project. We hope that this newsletter, augmented with personal contacts, will go some way to doing this. Thank you for your continued support and your interest.

Students, scholarships and research

Congratulations to our Masters Research Scholars: both Debi Futter Puati of the Cook Islands and Setapu Resture of Tuvalu submitted their theses at the end of February. After we celebrated their achievements together at a party, Debi returned home to the Cook Islands and Setapu continues to live in Auckland before heading back to Tuvalu to assist on other research. Once these theses have been examined a pdf copy will be available on request and bound copies will be taken to both Tuvalu and the Cook Islands, as well as being available from the University of Auckland Library. Each bound copy has a CD containing all the statistical information obtained via archive research, which will also be available along with the pdf. The abstracts of these two theses are attached at the end of this newsletter.

The second pair of Masters Research scholarships in health development will be filled either in July 2010 or February 2011.

Both the PhD scholarships are underway. Evelyn Marsters is focusing particularly on mobility in her ethnographic study of Cook Islands – NZ health. After several months of preparation, she commenced in August 2009 and is now well established in her work. Good links have been maintained with the Auckland Regional Public Health Service, and we are very grateful for their help. Evelyn is developing her fieldwork networks in New Zealand with plans for a preliminary and a longer visit to Rarotonga and Aitutaki later in the year. We welcomed Tufoua Panapa from Tuvalu earlier in March 2010. After a “few delays” (!) in his journey, Tufoua is into the planning phase for his research on Tuvalu health and attending advanced classes. He will be concentrating on school and community-based health development in Tuvalu.

Over the long summer vacation the project had invaluable assistance from Faculty of Arts ‘Summer Scholars’: Kaea Mateanga, Lara Penman and Rosanna Keam. Guided by Dr Debbie Dunsford, who has recently been appointed to coordinate the history of Pacific Health in New Zealand Report that our project is writing, they undertook several tasks especially work in the archives at the University, in Archives New Zealand in Auckland and Wellington, and in the archives of the Lung Health Association, thanks to the cooperation of Bette Swan.

Looking ahead: During 2010 we are expecting a visit from TB health workers from the Cook Islands, who will learn more about our project and the TB service provided by ARPHS, and a
research visit from a Canadian graduate student working on a project similar to ours. Julie plans a month of fieldwork in the southern Cooks, and she and Yvonne Underhill-Sem will accompany Evelyn when she makes her preliminary visit to Rarotonga. Anne and Keith Chambers will be visiting Auckland and Tuvalu towards the end of this year. Members of the project team will be taking up an invitation to work more closely with the TB lab at Auckland hospital, and look forward to closer liaison with clinical TB health professionals as the ethnographic phase of our research gets underway. Various members of the research team are working on publications from the first year of research.

Our Research Office
The Research Office has moved along the corridor to room 836a on the 8th floor of the Human Sciences Building, 10 Symonds St, Auckland City, phone (64) 09 3737599 ext 87744. The postal address is c/- the Anthropology Department. Faxes addressed to the project can be sent to (64) 09 373441

The project has two new part-time staff members to assist with the administration and research support. Sagaa Malua and Philippa Blackmore joined us in late 2009 and have been busy assisting the Masters students with the statistical data from the archive, moving offices and assisting the Principal Investigators with all manner of tasks. If you have any queries or would like to contact the project for any reason please call them on the above number or email them at s.malua@auckland.ac.nz or  p.blackmore@auckland.ac.nz

Highlights of Activities: March 2009 – March 2010
Through Auckland Regional Public Health Service and with the support of the Tuvalu community, Setapu, Julie and Judith undertook the independent evaluation of the Tuvalu TB Awareness project and presented a report to all those involved in the planning and delivery of the project. This report will be available on our webpage shortly:  http://www.arts.auckland.ac.nz/uoa/social-research-on-tb-and-health?S=M_PTB

In July, the project took advantage of Drs Anne and Keith Chambers’ research visit to Auckland and the presence of many (but unfortunately not all) of our research group members, to have a workshop where we reviewed progress and plans and documented the tasks to be completed in the coming year. We were inspired by the presentation by the three PhD graduates from our previous “Political Ecology of TB Project” on working and learning together in a transdisciplinary framework.

Setapu, accompanied by Anne and Keith, made a research visit to Tuvalu, with a brief time at the Fiji School of Medicine to scope archival resources there. Debi carried out research in Rarotonga and both Setapu and Debi spent time working in the archives in Wellington. The Fiji School of Medicine (and its precursors) is central to health services in both the Cook Islands and Tuvalu and we hope to do further work there. We are very grateful for all the assistance rendered our team members in all these places, as well as in the Western Pacific and other archives here in Auckland.

Conferences, Seminars and Publications
Many of the project members attended a workshop "Archival Renderings: Splicing the Anthropology and History of Medicine in Pacific Archives" held in the Anthropology Department. This was led by Sandra Widmer, a summer visitor in Anthropology at Auckland who is also working on the Western Pacific Archives. At the workshop we discussed many of the difficulties of working with archives and what is involved in going from the archival materials to historical narratives.
We also attended a training workshop in February for Public Health professionals at Greenlane where Evelyn and Julie presented an overview of the current project and Evelyn’s proposed research with Cook Islanders. It was great to meet up with so many people and we appreciate all offers of assistance with the project.

Three researchers attended Auckland Regional Public Health Service/ Lung Health Association Lunch and Seminar for World TB Day on March 19th. There we learned from the presenters about key messages from the recent TB conference in Cancun, Mexico. Messages included:

- the importance of smoking cessation to TB control
- the rise of multi-drug resistant TB which is produced by poor TB treatment and hence the importance of having excellent case-finding and treatment systems in place before the new generation drugs become available—otherwise the future looks bleak
- the huge and concerning variability of TB control systems worldwide,
- TB/HIV and other interactions which create more cases and make treatment more difficult.

Project Disseminations included:

- Littleton J, Park J. 2009 Tuberculosis and Syndemics: Implications for Pacific Health in New Zealand. SOCIAL SCIENCE AD MEDICINE 69(11): 1674-1680
- Park J, Resture S, Littleton J. 2009 Evaluation report of the Tuvalu Tuberculosis Awareness Programme
- 2009 From Auckland to the Wider Pacific and Back Again: A Syndemic Approach to Transnational TB. Park J, Littleton J. Dept. Of Anthropology Seminar Series, University of Auckland, 19 March
- Futter-Puati D 2010 Maki Maro Tuberculosis in the Cook Islands, University of Auckland MA Theses
- Resture S 2010 Te Maama Pala, University of Auckland MA Thesis

Feedback

We will be very pleased to have any feedback from you on any matters relating to the project.

Judith Littleton and Julie Park, for the Research Team.
Abstracts

Maki Maro - Tuberculosis in the Cook Islands, A social history 1896 – 1975

Debbie Futter-Puati

Between 1955 and 1975 the Cook Islands medical service launched an all out campaign against tuberculosis (TB). The purpose of this study was to explore the anti-TB campaign in the Cook Islands from the time the planning began for a ‘full frontal attack’ on TB, just prior to World War Two; concluding in 1975 when TB rates had dropped dramatically. It investigates the complexities of working with high TB infection rates within a colonial setting beset by problems relating to physical isolation, communication and travel, political and economic issues, alongside a lack of human resources.

In addition to eleven interviews with medical personnel or patients historically involved with TB this study also included an examination of TB-related files from the Cook Islands administration, the New Zealand Department of Island Territories and the New Zealand Department of Health, held in the Cook Islands Archives and Archives New Zealand in Wellington.

The thesis adopts a chronological approach. The history of the Cook Islands administration and medical services from 1896 until 1945 are investigated to provide understanding and important background information pertinent to the eventual anti-TB campaign. The years of Dr Tom Davis’ influence from 1945-51 provide an insight into the influence of a motivated individual on the medical service. From 1952 until 1975 the planning, implementation and ongoing difficulties and modification of the anti-TB campaign are examined.

This thesis contributes to the history of TB and public health in the Cook Islands and internationally. It reveals the importance of the medical service developing constructive relationships with community, national and international organisations. The thesis highlights the influence of key motivated individuals and the need for a culturally appropriate and responsive multifaceted approach to public health that adapts to change.

Te Maama Pala: Continuity and change in coping with Tuberculosis in Tuvalu

Setapu Asenati Resture

This thesis discusses attempts to deal with the problem of tuberculosis in Tuvalu from 1930 to the present. It examines the challenges faced by the Department of Health in Tuvalu in controlling tuberculosis in Tuvalu during the colonial period (1892-1974) and as an independent state (1974 to the present) and how the challenges changed over time. This examination of tuberculosis (TB) in Tuvalu in the twentieth century provides a window into the administration of health as one example of colonial and post-colonial processes of government in a small Pacific Island nation. This study considers the difficulties and struggles faced by the medical services during the colonial period and into the time of independence.

The research uncovered a number of problems associated with dealing with tuberculosis in Tuvalu. These include, the lack of awareness among the public on the disease, the social problem of stigmatisation and the late recognition of TB which, in turn, led to a delay in treatment. Problems
with transportation and mobility and crowded living conditions were identified as agents of TB which also promoted the spread of the disease in Tuvalu. This problem was further exacerbated by intermittent treatment, screening and control programmes. This was due to irregular services, a lack of resources and transport problems to outer islands. Shortage of trained medical health staff also contributed to the problem of controlling the spread of tuberculosis.

The research encountered a number of its own problems. Obtaining useful information for my research in Tuvalu proved to be a challenge as most of the important information and materials were lost during the move from the old Princess Margaret Hospital to the new one.

Materials from the University of Auckland, the Fiji School of Medicine, Tuvalu National Archives, and the Princess Margaret Hospital in Tuvalu were examined to gather more information on tuberculosis and how it was dealt with by the colonial administration and the independent government of Tuvalu. Personal interviews and exchange of emails with experts on the topic also provided important insights into the topic.

Tuberculosis is still a major health problem in Tuvalu. This is despite dedicated local women’s groups who continue to support TB control programmes in a variety of ways including village inspections. In addition, more medical health staffs have been trained to help with the TB control and education programmes. These programmes have been financed by international aid agencies such as the WHO and UNICEF. Despite these efforts, the TB rates for Tuvalu remain high and present an ongoing challenge for the medical services of this Pacific Island nation.