News from the “Transnational Pacific Health Through the Lens of TB” research project

November 2012

Greetings, Talofa and Kia Orana,

This is the fourth annual newsletter from our project. We hope that this newsletter, in conjunction with personal contacts, helps us to keep in touch with all those who have had some involvement in our research to date. Thank you for your continued support and your interest.

Students and scholarships

Ph.D. candidates Evelyn Marsters and Tufoua Panapa continued their fieldwork in the Cook Islands and Tuvalu, respectively, throughout 2011 and 2012. They both recently completed fieldwork reports, and are working towards their completion deadlines. Tufoua’s research focusses on the triangular relationship between health, education and development in Tuvalu, while Evelyn’s work is a syndemic approach to transnational Cook Islands health.
Dr. Judith McCool (School of Population Health) and Julie Park discuss “Better Lives” at the launch in March 2012.

Rochelle Newport completed her Bachelor of Health Science (Honours) dissertation at the end of 2011, and has since enrolled in a Master’s programme supervised by Jennifer Hand. Rochelle concluded in her dissertation that health promotion activities in the Cook Islands have the potential to use transnational social spaces as sites for community capacity building. Her Master’s thesis – which is supported by a HRC Master’s scholarship – is exploring the potential of fiscal measures to limit access to unhealthy products, such as sugar-sweetened carbonated beverages.

Sagaa Malua also completed her dissertation at the end of 2011 for a Post-Graduate Diploma in Anthropology. Sagaa’s dissertation looked at the effects of immigration policy changes on Pacific migrants, and involved ethnographic research with the Tuvaluan community in Auckland. Sagaa has extended her dissertation research to produce a substantial report on the Auckland Tuvaluan community, with attention to health and health care and the highly problematic immigration policy/health nexus.

Research progress and activities

One of the research group’s major accomplishments in 2011 was the completion of the monograph Better Lives: The Struggle for Health of Transnational Pacific Peoples in New Zealand, 1950–2000, which focusses on the history of Pacific health and health care in
New Zealand with a strong emphasis on the importance of community initiatives. The book launch in March 2012 was a great success, and was both a good way to express our thanks to the participants and also to promote the discussion of the successes and barriers to Pacific health care.

Julie Park and Judith Littleton spent three weeks on Atiu, Cook Islands, researching transnationalism and health in August and September, 2011. This visit served as a follow-up to a trip made by Julie in June/July 2010. Following their 2011 Atiu fieldwork, Julie and Judith produced a report for the HRC on their findings.

One element of outreach in 2012 was the publication of a small book in Cook Islands Maori and English on the Healthy Lunch programme in Enuamanu School, Atiu, Cook Islands. This book was put together by Julie Park and the school students, and was printed in Auckland and then returned to the school and to the Ministries of Health and the Prime Minister’s Department, Cook Islands.

Throughout 2011 and 2012 we have participated in a range of conferences and meetings. In late 2011, members of our research group presented at the New Zealand Historical Association meeting, the Population Association of New Zealand’s biennial conference, and the Annual Australasian Society for Human Biology conference. Julie Park also presented research on TB in Maori and Pacific communities at a conference in Edmonton, Canada, and she and Judith Littleton represented the research group at the 42nd Union World Conference on Lung Health in Lille, France. In 2012, several members of our group presented at the Health Research Council Pacific Health Fono, the Cook Islands Health conference, and a one-day workshop on tuberculosis organised by Auckland Regional Public Health.
Julie Park and Judith Littleton also presented at the annual meeting of the American Association of Physical Anthropologists, and at “Colonial Subjects of Health and Difference: Races, Populations, Diversities”, hosted by the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin.

The year ahead

Our research office

The research office is in 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.

Sagaa Malua continues to provide invaluable research support and administrative assistance, and can be reached through the number above or via email s.malua@auckland.ac.nz

Please note that she works part time. We are in the process of updating our website, which is at: http://www.arts.auckland.ac.nz/ua/home/about/departments-and-schools/department-of-anthropology/research-5/social-research-on-tb-and-health/transnational-health-in-the-pacific-through-the-lens-of-tb

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