



NATIONAL HEALTH ETHICS AND RESEARCH COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT (2016)

NHERC Annual Report 2016



MINISTRY OF HEALTH
P.O Box 59 Vaiola Hospital

National Health Ethics and Research Committee Annual Report (2016)

Secretariat of the National Health Ethics and Research Committee

Period Covered: January 01st 2016 – December 31st 2016.

1. PURPOSE OF NHERC

- 1.1. To improve the health of the Tongan people through supporting, promoting and upholding appropriate high quality health research that is consistent with Tongan people's context, values and standards;
- 1.2. To protect and safeguard the dignity, rights, safety, health and well-being of all Tongan people partaking in a research study or potential research participants;
- 1.3. To review and provide independent comment on the ethical and possible cultural problems that may arise in any aspect of health research;

2. FUNCTIONS OF THE NHERC

Ethical Review

- 2.1. Provide independent, competent and timely review of the ethics of research proposals involving human participants;
- 2.2. To create and continually review Ethical Codes and Guidelines for personnel undertaking health-related research with human subjects and human tissue/parts involving the Ministry of Health;
- 2.3. To monitor all ethical aspects of health research and ensure health researchers uphold and conduct responsible and ethical research;

Health Research Policies and Processes

- 2.4. The initiation and support for health research;
- 2.5. Development of a national research application form (R1);
- 2.6. Development, endorsement and enforcement of the Ministry of Health 'Health Research policy';
- 2.7. Development and enforcement of corresponding law, acts, guidelines and standards that assist, support and maintain ethical research practices;
- 2.8. Advising or informing the National Health Development Committee (NHDC) on health research policies and guidelines and health-related research proposals/studies;
- 2.9. The promotion and dissemination of health research results and the utilization of these results to the improvement of health practices and operations, health policy, and health care delivery to ultimately improve the health of the Tongan people;
- 2.10. Regularly review and update the Operational Guidelines and policies, if changes are required;

2.11. The NHERC submits an annual report to the NHDC by March each year;

Health Research and Ethics Development

2.12. Fostering, recruitment, education, training and retention of individuals engaged in health research in Tonga;

2.13. The encouragement of health research initiatives by soliciting research proposals and applications, particularly in areas considered by the NHERC to have a high priority;

2.14. Develop and maintain close and supportive relationships with Institutions and researchers including charitable, private or other organizations that fund and conduct health research.

3. Progress Report

Meetings

The NHERC had 3 Full Committee meetings during 2016 at bi-monthly to monthly intervals with 6 Expedited Review Circulations as summarized in the table below.

#	Type of Meeting	Dates
1	Full Committee meeting	03 rd March 2016
2	Full Committee meeting	16 th June 2016
3	Full Committee meeting	19 th October 2016
#	Type of Meeting	Dates
1	Expedited Review Circulation	30 th March 2016
2	Expedited Review Circulation	08 th April 2016
3	Expedited Review Circulation	27 th June 2016
4	Expedited Review Circulation	05 th July 2016
5	Expedited Review Circulation	09 th August 2016
6	Expedited Review Circulation	12 th October 2016

The Reason for the Expedited Review Circulations was because there were many undergraduate submissions and in addition, the ethical approval submissions were sporadic which meant that for one quarter there were either one or two submissions which did not warrant the need for a Full Committee meeting.

Members

The Secretariat of the National Health Ethics and Research Committee (NHERC) wishes to extend its utmost appreciation and gratitude to the following members for sparing their invaluable time and contribution to the NHERC’s ongoing development and growth. Without your aid and support the NHERC would not be running along smoothly. We here at the Secretariat thank you deeply.

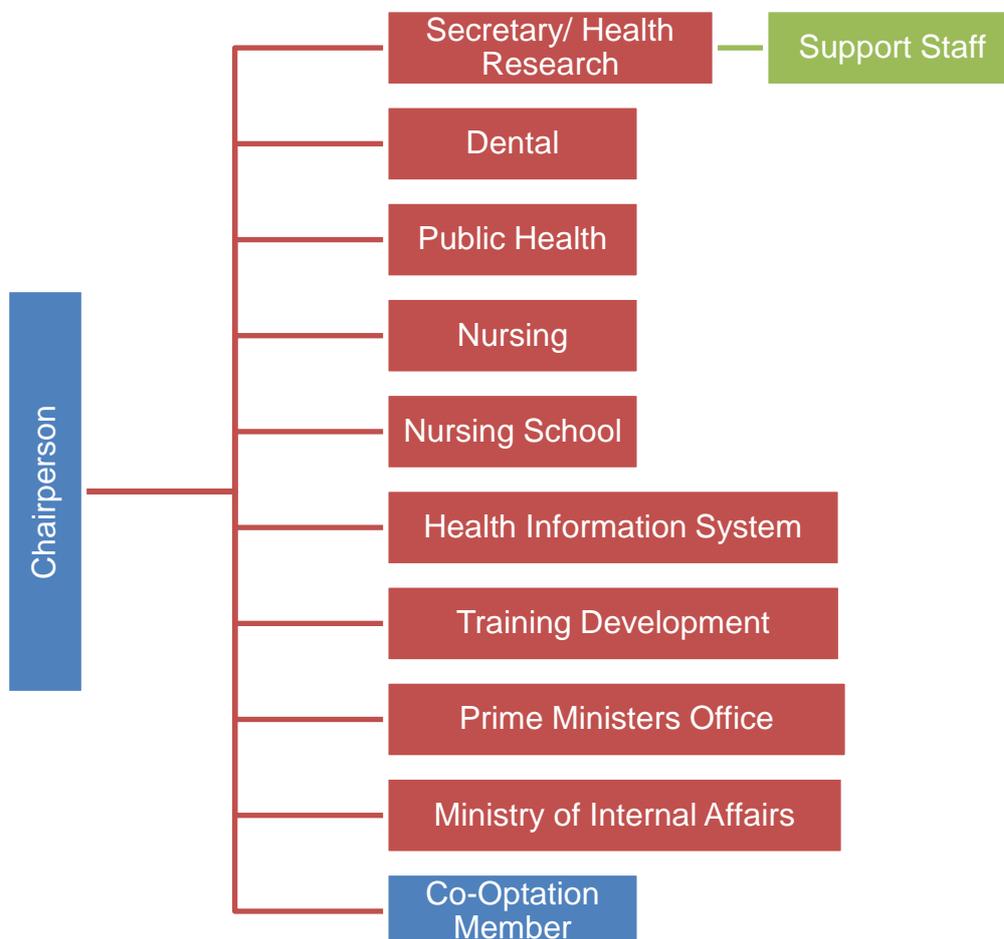
Current Members of the NHERC

- ❖ Dr. Lisiata ‘Ulufonua (Chairperson)
- ❖ Dr. Leiukamea Saafi (Clinical Representative)
- ❖ Dr. Reynold ‘Ofanoa (Public Health Representative)
- ❖ Dr. ‘Amanaki Fakakovikaetau (Dental Representative)
- ❖ Sr. Pinomi Lātu (Nursing Representative)
- ❖ Sr. Tilema Cama (Nursing School/ Training Representative)
- ❖ Mr Sione Hufanga (Health Information System/ Training Representative)

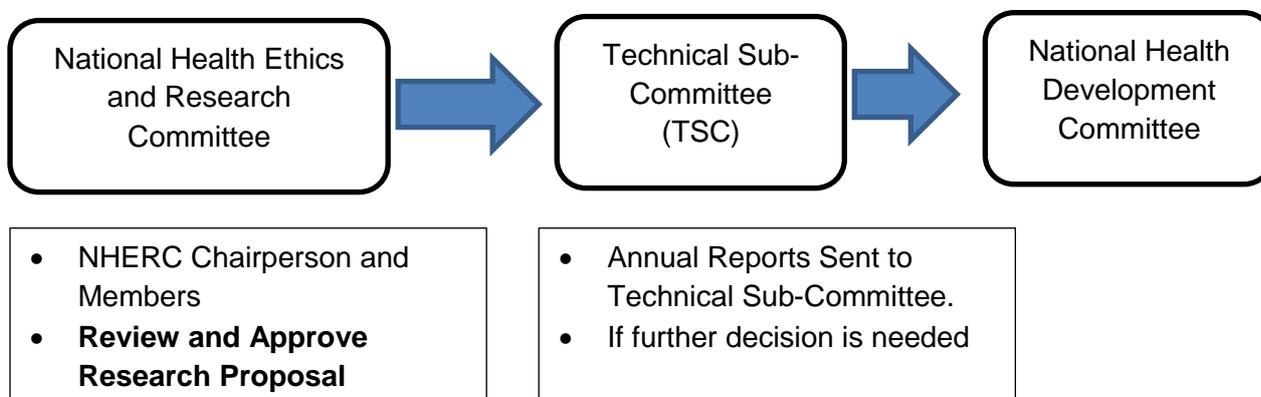
National Health Ethics and Research Committee (2016)

- ❖ Ms. Fono-ki-moana Hola (Prime Minister's Office Representative)
- ❖ Mrs. Tupousilia Tonga (Prime Minister's Office Representative)
- ❖ Mr. 'Inoke Kupu (Ministry of Internal Affairs Representative) - **Retired**
- ❖ Mr. Sioape Kupu (Secretary)
- ❖ Mrs. 'Eu'ese Fetokai (Support Staff)

Committee Structure



NHERC Reporting Structure



Milestones

It is always encouraging to see the development of the NHERC and the progress made throughout the year. It is more heartening to see some Research endeavours from our own Ministry of Health. These are some of the milestones the NHERC has reached for the year 2016 and is still moving to grasp higher goals in the near future.

1. The Community Representative from the Ministry of Internal Affairs has retired. The Secretariat wishes to extend its utmost gratitude and appreciation to Mr. 'Inoke Kupu for his hard work and invaluable contribution to the Ethics Committee throughout the years. We hope your experience was that of a positive one and we wish you both good health and a much deserved break.
2. The NHERC would like to welcome two new Representatives from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) Ms. Fono-ki-moana Hola and Tupousilia Tonga.
3. 6 Final Reports have been submitted to the National Health Ethics and Research Committee this year.
 - The Masters Research Report "*A Qualitative study exploring Tongan nurses' perspectives of the 'Advanced Nursing Diploma'*" by Ms. Kieh Christopherson Dunn was submitted on the **29/03/2016.**
 - Organization Proposal titled "*Non-Communicable disease-related disability research in the Pacific Islands*" by Dr. Wendy Snowdon from Fiji National University has been completed and a copy of the final report has been submitted to the Ministry of Health on the **15/04/2016.**
 - Organization Proposal titled "*Giving Birth: The voices of Tongan women in Tonga and the United States*" by Shelly J. Reed from BYU College of Nursing and a copy of the final report has been submitted to the Ministry of Health on the **06/05/2016.**
 - A Master Thesis titled "*The extent to which changes in culture and lifestyle in particular health, exercise, diet, have had an impact on Tongan society*" by Jacinta Forde and a copy of the final report has been submitted to the Ministry of Health on the **06/05/2016.**
 - A Master Thesis titled "*The Prevalence of Chlamydia among pregnant women in Tonga*" by Dr. Louise Fonua and a copy of the final report has been submitted to the Ministry of Health on the **29/06/2016**
 - Undergraduate Research Proposal titled "*The Clinical Effect of Short Spin Cross Match (Immediate Spin) Cross-match and Complete Match Red Cells Transfused to patients in Vaiola Hospital*" by Mr. Semisi Lenati from Fiji National University has been completed and a copy of the final report has been submitted to the Ministry of Health on the **27/11/2016.**
4. The NHERC reviewed **17** new proposals (1 proposal from previous year now noted) for the year of 2016. Details are outlined in Table 1 and Table 2.
 - 2 Master's Thesis
 - 1 PhD Thesis
 - 3 Undergraduate Proposals
 - 11 Organizational/Individual Research
5. From 2014 – 2016 there have been a total of 44 proposals submitted to the NHERC and have been reviewed and followed-up.

6. Full Access to HINARI E-library was obtained for 2016 on the 4th of March 2016. Access to HINARI is currently being used by the nursing students and staff of QSSN. Access to other departments still underway.
7. Health Research Policy still under development.
8. Health Research Application Form (R2) was approved by the Technical Sub-Committee in April 2016.

NHERC Needs.

- ❖ **Training Needs of Ethics Committee members.** Due to the fact that the National Health Ethics and Research Committee is still starting its baby steps one must understand the current situation. Due to many of the NHERC members needing more training on ethical review the resulting constraint would be the dawdling progress in approving pending proposals. It is the wish of the Research Section to make decisions on research approvals faster and more punctual. So far, all duties and responsibilities of both the Ethics Committee members are self-taught and is a learning process as they progress and become more exposed and aware of their roles and duties, however formal training would bring out their full potential.
- ❖ **The short-handed in staff:** The Section requires a Research Assistant, because majority of the work-load is focused on the Secretary of the NHERC. Another support staff would help with all the administrative roles to ease and balance out the work-load. In addition, a policy analyst or advisor to assist in the development of the Health Research Policy, which is crucial.
- ❖ **To establish a robust and comprehensive system** that caters to the different types of proposals that are submitted and to review the proposals efficiently and in a timely manner.

In Conclusion

To conclude, the NHERC has come a long way since 2016 and its future looks promising. There were some setbacks this year which have resulted in only a few full Committee meetings being called, but the NHERC has persevered. There are always some tweaks and bumps to work on, but that is all part of the adventure. We hope the NHERC can be more efficient and prompt in its reviews in the future and to get the Health Research Policy off the ground. However, I would like to humbly thank everyone that has helped move things along, I cannot thank you enough for the support and ongoing hard-work you have invested into this Committee. I look forward to further developments and on-going collaborations with other Ministries and Organizations. Here is to another year of greatness. Malo.

Kindest Regards,



Sioape Kupu
Health Research Officer Graduate
NHERC Secretary

Date: 01.02.2017

Table 1: Research Proposals Submitted and Approved

#	Reference	Title	Principal Investigator / Local Investigator	Institution	Duration of Approval	Type of Review / Approval	Current Status
28	190315.4	A Qualitative study exploring Tongan nurses' perspectives of the 'Advanced Nursing Diploma in the Prevention, Detection and Management of NCD'	Ms. Kieh Christopherson Dunn Sr. 'Ana Kavaefiafi	University of Liverpool England	1 year 19.03.15 – 19.03.16	Expedited Review / <i>Conditional Approval</i>	Completed
29	030316	Kids' Cam Tonga – Assessing Tongan children's food environment and how best to improve it	Dr. Viliami Puloka Ms. Louise Signal	University of Otago	2.5 years 03.03.2015 – 03.09.2017	Full Committee / <i>Conditional Approval</i>	In Progress
30	050216	Pacific multi-country Mapping and Behavioural study: HIV and STI risk vulnerability among Key Population.	Professor Heather Worth Michelle 'O Connor Dr. Louise Fonua	University of New South Wales	1 year 16.06.16 – 16.06.17	Full Committee / <i>Conditional Approval</i>	In Progress
31	240216	Evaluation of Tonga Anti-Tobacco Mass Media Campaign	Associate Professor Philayrath Phongsavan Mr. Sione Fifita	University of Sydney, Australia	1 year 08.04.16 – 08.04.17	Full Committee / <i>Conditional Approval</i>	In Progress
32	060216	Factors Contributing to Teenage Pregnancies in Tonga	Mrs. 'Ana Vaka'uta	Fiji National University	-	Terminated	Terminated
33	260516	Hospital Staff Perception of a Collaborative Twinning Program	Professor Karen Francis Ms. Carolyn Mornane Sr. Pinomi Latu	Australian Catholic University St. John of God Health Care	1 year 09.08.16 – 09.08.17	Expedited Review / <i>Conditional Approval</i>	In Progress

National Health Ethics and Research Committee (2016)

34	270516	Mercury Monitoring in women of child-bearing age in the Asia and the Pacific Region	Ms. Imogen Ingram Dr. Sunia Foliaki	University of Southern Maine	-	Full Committee / <i>Rejected and encouraged resubmission</i>	Rejected and encouraged re-submission
35	310516	Use of Traditional Medicinal Plants by Patients Diagnosed with Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus in Vaiola Hospital, Tongatapu, Tonga	Ms. Mita Vaka	Fiji National University	1 year 27.06.16 – 27.06.17	Expedited Review / <i>Conditional Approval</i>	Completed
36	030616	Public Understanding of Developmental Origin of Health and Disease (DOHaD) amongst Pregnant Women and Mothers in Tonga	Mr. Sioape Fe'iloakitau Kahomovailahi Kupu	Ministry of Health	1 year 16.06.16 – 16.06.17	Full Committee / <i>Conditional Approval</i>	In Progress
37	020616	National Study "The Experience and Needs of Children, Including Children With Disabilities Living in Tonga"	Mrs. Gabriella 'Ilolahia	Ma'a Fafine mo e Famili	-	Reviewed on the 16.03.16 pending amendments	Reviewed pending re-submission of amendments
38	130616	Describing Best Practice Health Promotion Programs in the Pacific	A/Professor Colin Bell	Deakin University	1 year 16.06.16 – 16.06.17	Full Committee / <i>Conditional Approval</i>	In Progress
39	080616	Patient Satisfaction towards pharmaceutical services provided in Vaiola Hospital Outpatient Pharmacy, Tonga	Ms. Fisi'inuka Talanoa	Fiji National University	1 year 05.07.16 – 05.07.17-	Expedited Review / <i>Conditional Approval</i>	Completed

National Health Ethics and Research Committee (2016)

40	NHERC 04/2013	Improvement of Tongan Lifestyle Approach from Oral Health	Dr. Sayuri Kawamuri Dr. Fusi Fifita	Malimali Project 2006-2013/DDS	3 years 13.09.2013 – 13.09.2016	Extension and amendment of previous approval	Completed, awaiting Final Report
41	290916	The People living with HIV Stigma Index	Ms. Prithika Prasad Dr. Louise Fonua	Ministry of Health, Fiji Fiji Network for People Living with HIV/AIDS	1 year 12.10.2016 – 12.10.2017	Full Committee / <i>Conditional Approval</i>	In Progress
42	190716	The Policy development process in relation to food-related policies in Tonga: A case study of the School Food Policy	Associate Professor Colin Bell Mr. Sione Hufanga	C-POND Deakin University	2 years 09.01.2017 - 16.12.19	Expedited Review / <i>Conditional Approval</i>	In Progress <i>*Submitted in July 2016 but reviewed in January 2017</i>
43	100117	Seeking mo'ui lelei abroad Examining medical travel	Ms. Zakea Boeger Dr. Lisiate 'Ulufonua	Hawaii University	1 year 10.01.2017 – 10.01.2018	Expedited Review / <i>Conditional Approval</i>	In Progress <i>*Submitted in October 2016 but reviewed in January 2017</i>
44	080516	Data Security Assessment for Government	Siuta Laulaupea'alu	University of Waikato		Yet to be Reviewed	Terminated / Discontinued

Table 2: Summary of Research Proposals Submitted and Approved or currently being reviewed in 2016

#	Title	Principal Investigator / Local Investigator	Summary
1	A Qualitative study exploring Tongan nurses' perspectives of the 'Advanced Nursing Diploma in the Prevention, Detection	Ms. Kieh Christopherson Dunn Sr. 'Ana Kavaefiafi	A 2004 NCD Risk Factors STEPS Report found that 99.9% of the Tongan population is at a moderate or high risk of developing a non-communicable diseases (NCD). As part of their primary care strategy against NCDs, the Government of Tonga partnered with the Australian Government to train 20 nurses in an Advanced Nursing Diploma in the Prevention, Detection and Management of NCDs. Primary-care level intervention is key to preventing the

	and Management of NCD'		prevalence of NCDs and NCD risk factors. Nurses are in a position to provide care at this level. The aim of this research was to explore the perspectives of Tongan nurses and administrative staff of the Advanced Nursing Diploma in the Prevention, Detection and Management of NCDs in order to provide feedback to the community-level nursing care practice for the management of NCDs.
2	Kids' Cam Tonga – Assessing Tongan children's food environment and how best to improve it	Dr. Viliami Puloka Ms. Louise Signal	<p>The study aims to answer the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the nature of the environment that Tongan children live in? • How do Tongan children interact with this environment? • What public health interventions could be put in place to improve the environment? • What is the value of using automated photography to study public health issues in the Pacific? <p>Study Population: Approximately 100 children aged 11-13 randomly selected from class lists. Tongatapu schools, Nuku'alofa and outside Nuku'alofa, Government and church schools. Ha'apai to represent outer islands settings Inclusion criteria: be Tongan, aged 11-13years show an interest in participating, commit to attending multiple sessions at school provide their consent and parental consent to participate and to record images in their home environment. Exclusion criteria: no participant or parental consent or desire to participate and personal circumstances that are inconsistent with the demands of the study. Design: Observational study of Tongan children's everyday environments. Instruments: Autographer wearable cameras and GPS recorders both worn on lanyards around the neck. Methodology: Ecological momentary assessment – repeated sampling of participant behaviours and experiences in their real-time, natural environments. Data collection: each child will wear a camera and GPS for three days – Friday, Saturday and Sunday</p>
3	Pacific multi-country Mapping and Behavioural study: HIV and STI risk vulnerability among Key Population.	Professor Heather Worth Michelle 'O Connor Dr. Louise Fonua	This study wants to know more about different population groups in Tonga who may be at risk of Human Immune Deficiency Virus (HIV)/ Acute Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). The research study is aiming to better understand sexual and other behaviours related to HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among key population groups across Tonga. It also aims to understand more about the HIV and STI prevalence among key population groups. This

National Health Ethics and Research Committee (2016)

			study will help the Ministry of Health and other partners to design and implement better health services for people in your community.
4	Evaluation of Tonga Anti-Tobacco Mass Media Campaign	Associate Professor Philayrath Phongsavan Mr. Sione Fifita	The evaluation objectives are to assess whether the campaign has an impact on: awareness and knowledge about the consequences of second-hand smoking (SHS) for the health of babies and children, and for others exposed to SHS; attitudes and behavioural intentions to protect babies and children from SHS exposure; smoking cessation; smoking uptake, and; support for national and government-led tobacco-free policies. A pre-post-campaign cohort survey of up to 2,000 participants drawn using multi-stage, stratified, proportionate household sampling scheme will be used. The primary research question of this project is: what are the effects of the anti-tobacco mass media campaign ' <i>Baby Alive</i> ' and related campaign messages have on levels of awareness, knowledge and behaviours related to second-hand smoking.
6	Hospital Staff Perception of a Collaborative Twinning Program	Professor Karen Francis Ms. Carolyn Mornane	Objectives: The aim of the project is to capture staff perceptions of the Tonga Twinning Program (TTP). The Information gathered will inform future directions of the program. Methodology: Semi-structured qualitative interviews will be conducted with individual participants. Participants will be asked the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you tell me what involvement you have had with the Twinning Program between Vaiola Hospital and St. John of God Ballarat Hospital? • If you haven't had any direct involvement with the program can you tell me what you know about the program? • What do you consider to be the strengths of this program? • In your opinion what could be done to enhance the program? The researchers will use probing to explore points raised by participants. The textual data generated will be examined using content and thematic analysis techniques. These techniques enable general assumptions within the texts to be delineated and significant words and phrases to be identified. The analysis moves to isolating implicit and explicit ideas embedded in the texts that enable the phenomenon of interest to be explicated i.e. staff perceptions of the twinning program.

			Impact Future directions for the twinning program will be delineated that will inform planning for 2017 and beyond. It is envisaged that existing projects will be continued and potentially expanded and new areas for focus identified.
8	Use of Traditional Medicinal Plants by Patients Diagnosed with Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus in Vaiola Hospital, Tongatapu, Tonga	Ms. Mita Vaka	This proposed research is to investigate the use of traditional medicinal plants by patients diagnosed with type 2 diabetes mellitus. The objectives are to determine the local and common name(s) of the traditional medicinal plant(s) used, ascertain the usage of the plant(s), part of the plant(s) used, how it is prepared, why it is used, to investigate the administration of the traditional medicinal preparation(s) administered alone or in combination with modern medicine(s) and to determine the opinions of the effectiveness of the traditional medicinal preparation(s) used. This research is a descriptive cross sectional study, where a structured questionnaire will be used to interview the patients who are diagnosed with type 2 diabetes who will volunteer to participate in this study. All patients aged 18 and above, diagnosed with type 2 diabetes who visits the diabetic Clinic in Vaiola Hospital, Tongatapu will be invited to participate. This study will help to determine the use of traditional medicinal plants by diabetic patients. It will also document the plants, parts of the plants used and how different parts of the plants are prepared for use in the management of type 2 diabetes. Some of the questions that can be answered from this study include; whether patients' take modern medicines together with traditional medicinal plants; do patients' stop taking modern medicines and choose to take the traditional medicinal plants etc. Generally, this study can be used as a baseline study for bigger studies in future. Moreover, it will help bring to light the current practices in the use of traditional medicinal plants in the management of type 2 diabetes in the population studied.
9	Public Understanding of Developmental Origin of Health and Disease (DOHaD) amongst Pregnant Women and Mothers in Tonga	Mr. Sioape Fe'iloakitau Kahomovailahi Kupu	The study proposes to establish a baseline level of public understanding of the DOHaD theory. Tonga will be using an adopted version of the DOHaD Survey done in New Zealand to establish the baseline. This study will provide that baseline, by collecting baseline that data in specific communities, will assist Tonga Ministry of Health to direct future interventions to where they might be most needed and effective. The DOHaD Survey focusing primarily on pregnant mothers and mothers with children below the age of 2. This research is increasingly looking to develop interventions to support public understanding of

			<p>these concepts. Presently little data exists around public understanding of this concept and no data is available here in Tonga. This new knowledge will offer significant information that can be used in the development of potential education and public health promotions around this concept here in the Kingdom.</p> <p>Sample: 200-300 participants. Participants: Mothers attending the antenatal clinic and health center will be approached by the research team and asked for their consent verbally if they wish to participate the study. Study Design: A cross-sectional study design will be used to determine the level of knowledge and awareness of the role of environmental exposures during developmental on non-communicable disease risk throughout life</p> <p>Data Collection: Face to face interviews will be conducted to gather data (interview questions and interview script attached). Participants will be recruited from pregnant mothers and mothers with children below the age of 2. Interview answers will be written down and not audio or video recorded, no general conversation will be recorded. Research Assistant will be asking question using the Interview Script (attached) and they will mark and write down the answer that would be appropriate in relation to the participant's response. Convenience sampling consisting of people readily available in the study setting. No effort will be made to randomly select participants however purposive sampling will be used to support collection of a sample to represent varied population types (age, gender, and ethnicity in each setting). Data Analysis: Data will be sent to the University of Auckland as they will be responsible for analysing the data and aggregating the data into an international database.</p>
10	National Study " <i>The Experience and Needs of Children, Including Children With Disabilities Living in Tonga</i> "	Mrs. Gabriella 'Ilolahia	<p>The objectives of the study are to generate insight and understanding of children's (positive and negative) experiences in the home and at school, including the experiences of children with disabilities. The intention is also to collate evidence – through semi-structured interviews with children and their families and observations (ethnographic approach) – on children's experiences of violence and abuse (in the home and at school) that will act as an action-oriented baseline for government, civil society and the community to develop and implement immediate and long-term child protection, safeguarding and prevention measures through the production of a baseline study. A primary</p>

National Health Ethics and Research Committee (2016)

			objective of the study is to improve the health and well-being of children, including children with disabilities in Tonga. The study aims to recruit 80 participants, 40 children and 40 parents, using snowballing sampling.
11	Describing Best Practice Health Promotion Programs in the Pacific	A/Professor Colin Bell	This project seeks to describe factors contributing to the success of health promotion (Healthy Islands) programs that have been awarded by the World Health Organisation Western Pacific Regional Office (WPRO) Healthy Islands Recognition Program. These programs are based in several Pacific Island countries including Tonga, the Federated States of Micronesia, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Tokelau and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. It has a qualitative case study design. Key informants (approximately 2 from each project) will be selected based on their involvement in the healthy islands recognition program and will be interviewed face to face or by telephone. We will conduct a theme analysis to draw together characteristics of these projects that have made them successful. It is hoped this work will benefit health in Pacific countries by describing the characteristics of successful projects
12	Patient Satisfaction towards pharmaceutical services provided in Vaiola Hospital Outpatient Pharmacy, Tonga	Ms. Fisi'inuka Talanoa	Introduction: Patient satisfaction has become an increasingly vital component and essential indicator of the quality of health care services, in which benefactions and improvements of patients' outcome is the vital function of all health care systems such as pharmaceutical care. Although research on patient satisfaction has become standard in most of the developed countries globally, there have not been much or any research done in Tonga. This study aimed to investigate patient satisfaction towards pharmaceutical services provided by the Outpatient Hospital Pharmacy. Method: This was a descriptive cross-sectional study conducted at Vaiola Hospital Outpatient Pharmacy in Tongatapu, Tonga from 27 th June through 22nd July, 2016. The study population was derived using Convenience Sampling to cover as many patients as possible who attended the Outpatient Pharmacy, and 200 patients gave their consent to participate. Data collection was done using a validated questionnaire consisting of closed and open ended question, administered to participants. Descriptive analysis of quantitative variables was done using SPSS software. Findings were presented in tables and graphs.

13	Improvement of Tongan Lifestyle Approach from Oral Health	Dr. Sayuri Kawamuri Dr. Fusi Fifita	<p>In the Kingdom of Tonga, the Ministry of Health has been pointing out that the prevention, reduction and treatment of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) is a current health issue. Aim: <i>Are the oral health prevention and the recognition of the relationship between oral health and NCD help to improve patients' lifestyle?</i> The increase of chewing activity is an effective approach to improving both obesity and binge eating. To increase chewing activity, the existence of health teeth with fine function is required. The South Pacific Medical Team, propose the campaign to conserve oral health by treatment for periodontal disease (PD). The campaign will provide improvement of adult's lifestyle by increasing their health consciousness. Through this project, Tongan dental stall will be the specialist for prevention of PD and improvement of patients' lifestyle, then will dedicate efficient treatment for oral health. The study will recruit 2000 patients through advertisements, daily visits to the clinic and public health school programmes. The study involves medical condition check-ups (blood pressure, blood glucose etc.) and oral health check-ups (dental examination, PD examination etc.).</p>
14	The People living with HIV Stigma Index	Ms. Prithika Prasad Dr. Louise Fonua	<p>The People Living with HIV Stigma Index survey was created to find out more about the experiences of people living with HIV, especially experiences of stigma or discrimination. There are a number of organizations campaigning against stigma and discrimination and fighting for the human rights of people living with HIV. This survey will one day provide information that will help these efforts. In order to collect such information (i.e. on what HIV-positive people are experiencing, specifically in relation to stigma and discrimination), the questionnaires and survey will be administered and managed by organizations or networks of people living with HIV in a country. The information that is collected from the questionnaires will then be put together and presented in a way that presents a general picture of the experiences of people living with HIV in that country. It is not information about individual experiences of stigma and/or discrimination. The information from the questionnaires will allow to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document the various experiences of people living with HIV within a particular country or community regarding HIV-related stigma and discrimination;

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare the situation of people living with HIV in one country or across different countries with respect to a particular issue; • Measure changes over a period of time so that we can answer questions like “Has the situation with respect to stigma, discrimination and rights of people living with HIV worsened or improved over the last couple of years in this community?” • Provide an evidence-base for policy change and programmatic interventions.
15	The Policy development process in relation to food-related policies in Tonga: A case study of the School Food Policy	Associate Professor Colin Bell Mr. Sione Hufanga	<p>Aim: That food-related policy development and implementation can be described and enhanced. Objectives: To assess the facilitators of and barriers to the development of specific-food related policies in Tonga, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Tonga School Food Policy • Control of the use of children in unhealthy food and drink advertising <p>Significance of Study: It is expected that Tonga and the Pacific region will benefit from involvement in this research through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insight into the policy-making process of organizations. • Stronger evidence on how to develop and implement evidence-informed food-related policy. • Individuals involved are also likely to benefit from increase understanding of food systems and policies, which may assist them in their work. <p>Methodology This research will use primarily qualitative methods (semi-structured key informant interviews). Between 10 and 20 participants will be recruited. A schedule comprising 8 questions has been developed. The interviews will be conducted either in the participant’s office or a place convenient for them. The interviews will last for a maximum of 1 hour (but generally around 45 minutes). Permission will be sought from each participant to tape record the interview. The data collection will be carried out by the C-POND research fellow/assistant in close communication with the chief investigators from Deakin University. The data will be analysed using N-VIVO software package to determine emerging themes</p>

National Health Ethics and Research Committee (2016)

16	Seeking mo'ui lelei abroad Examining medical travel	Ms. Zakea Boeger Dr. Lisiate 'Ulufonua	The purpose of this research is to better understand the long-term impacts of medical travel on Tongan patients and their families. There are three primary research objectives. The first is to better understand the contexts in which Tongan medical travel occurs (e.g. What illnesses, treatments, and destinations are most common?) The second is to better understand how the Tongan diaspora might impact medical travel (e.g. How do relatives abroad help facilitate access to treatment? Cut down costs? Transmit health information?). The third is to better understand how medical travel impacts patients' ideas about health, including what it means to be mo'ui lelei. Most of this research will be conducted through interviews with consenting patients, doctors, and other health professionals, although it will also occur through time spent with the Overseas Referral Committee (ORC) and other relevant groups. Potential health impacts include a look into the qualitative, long-term experiences of Tongan patients who go abroad for care (e.g. what they liked/didn't, what they learned, what was difficult), which could help the ORC plan and make decisions for referring patients abroad in the future.
17	Data Security Assessment for Government	Siuta Laulaupea'alu	The project focuses on the Government of Tonga's methodologies used to store and protect sensitive information, assess vulnerabilities and threats encountered, and their plan to countermeasure Cyber-attacks on existing computer systems. This project is an opportunity to alert the Government of Tonga into preparing for the worldwide issue of cybercrimes. The project findings will include a comprehensive documentation of the status of cyber security in Tonga. Potential security threats will be shared with the Government so that they may take appropriate actions against the cyber threats.

Table 3: Final Reports Submitted to the Research Section since 2014 to the end of 2016.

#	Reference	Title	Investigator(s)
1	240414	Physical Activity among adolescents in the Vava'u Island: Tonga.	Mr. Simon Larrson (Medical Student) Dr. Reynold 'Ofanoa
2	070714	What are the Normative, Perceived and Expressed Needs for Orthodontic Treatment amongst Tongan children aged 12 – 15 years old.	Nirmal Shal (Dental Student) Dr. Susitina Piukala
3	300714	The Impact of Australian Sports Outreach Program in Tonga	Mr. Siosaia Langitoto Mr. Sione Hufanga

National Health Ethics and Research Committee (2016)

4	190914	The Impact of Cataract on Poverty	Dr. Judith McCool Ms. Julienne Faletau (Masters Candidate) Mrs. Mele Vuki
5	211114.2	Assessing Tongan smokers' responses to Television advertisements about serious harms of tobacco use	Dr. 'Ofa Tukia
6	290115.1	Post-Mass Drug Administration Lymphatic Filariasis Transmission Assessment Survey.	Dr. Reynold 'Ofanoa
7	030315	Formative Research into barriers to participation in physical activity in the Pacific	Dr. Tom Carroll Dr. 'Ofa Tukia Mr. 'Eva Mafi
8	290115.2	Giving Birth: The Voices of Tongan Women in Tonga and the United States	Mrs. Shelly J. Reed Sr. 'Ana Kavaefiafi Mrs. Meliame Tupou
9	210115.1	Dentition Status and treatment needs of Down's Syndrome individuals attending 'Ofa Tu'i moe 'Amanaki and 'Alonga Residential Center's specialized institutions in Nuku'alofa Tongatapu	Ms. Mele Likivai Foliaki (BDS 4th Dental student). Dr. 'Amanaki Fakakovikaetau
10	210115.2	Periodontal status and treatment needs of Down's Syndrome individuals attending two specialized institutions in Nuku'alofa Tongatapu.	Mr. James Heimuli (BDS 4th Dental student). Dr. 'Amanaki Fakakovikaetau
11	100515	Prevalence and Factors contributing to Obesity among Tongan High School senior students in 2015	Ms. Litia 'Ahoafi Mr. Napolioni Vulakouvaki (Supervisor)
12	190315.1	The Prevalence of Chlamydia among pregnant women in Tonga	Dr. Louise Fonua Dr. Veisia Matoto
13	190315.4	A Qualitative study exploring Tongan nurses' perspectives of the 'Advanced Nursing Diploma in the Prevention, Detection and Management of NCD'	Ms. Kieh Christopherson Dunn Sr. 'Ana Kavaefiafi
14	190315.3	The extent to which changes in culture and lifestyle in particular health, exercise, diet, have had an impact on Tongan society	Ms. Jacinta Forde Mr. Fa'au Taumalolo Ma'ukakala
15	150414	Non-communicable disease-related disability research in the Pacific Islands: Tonga component	Dr. Wendy Snowden Mr. Sione Pouлива'ati