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Agenda Item N° 7.1

PICNet: ONE OF THE SIX SERVICES OF THE PACIFIC PUBLIC HEALTH SURVEILLANCE NETWORK (PPHSN) – BACKGROUND AND KEY ACTIVITIES

(Paper presented by Ms Christelle Lepers, Surveillance Information and Communication Officer, SPC)

PICNet, the Pacific infection control network is one of the six services of the Pacific Public Health Surveillance Network (PPHSN).

The other services of PPHSN include: PacNet (for alert and communication), LabNet (for verification and identification of outbreak aetiology), EpiNet (for preparedness and response), Pacific Syndromic Surveillance System (for outbreak detection) and the Strengthening Health Interventions in the Pacific – Data for Decision Making (SHIP-DDM) programme for capacity building.

Launched in 2006, PICNet has been created to be used as a tool for communication and sharing of experiences, particularly how to be innovative with limited resources to ensure patient and health care worker safety from infectious diseases.

Major activities of PICNet include the development of a regional infection prevention and control guidelines, as well as other guidance documents, in-country technical assistance and training in infection prevention and control for Pacific Island countries and territories.

Sharing of experiences between infection prevention and control professionals in the region could be strengthened through the reactivation of the PICNet discussion list and/or the use of other communication platforms, including the PPHSN website [Pacific Public Health Surveillance Network - \(paphn.net\)](https://paphn.net).

1. BACKGROUND

1. From the [First Regional EpiNet Workshop](#) that took place in Fiji Islands in 2003, it was evident that the lessons learnt from the SARS outbreak indicated a need to address infection control issues not only at a facility or national level but also at a regional level. Infection control, particularly in health care facilities, was identified as a critical element in interrupting transmission of not only SARS but also other priority infectious diseases in the region. Communication, accessibility of expertise and technical advice were recognized as areas in need of improvement to facilitate infection control response to infectious disease threats. Subsequent to this a recommendation of the [Second Regional EpiNet Workshop in New Caledonia, 2004](#) was, “To review and improve on the infection control measures in PICTs by establishing and formalizing the Pacific regional infection control network under the umbrella of the PPHSN”. In 2005, the Asian Development Bank and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (former name of SPC) contracted an infection control consultant for PPHSN to assess current infection control capacity in SPC member countries and territories and assist in planning activities in the region (more information in the article [“Boosting infection control measures in the Pacific Islands”](#) published in [Inform’ACTION n°22, December 2005](#)). PICNet was officially launched at a [Meeting and Training Workshop on Infection Control and Prevention](#), in February 2006, Lautoka, Fiji Islands.

2. PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

2. PICNet Key activities

2006 PICNet, the Pacific Regional Infection Control Network, was launched.

2008-2009 Training workshops on infection control were conducted in a number of Pacific Islands countries and territories under the framework of PPHSN through the Pacific Regional Influenza Pandemic Preparedness Project (PRIPPP) funded by AusAID. learn more in the article [“Building infection control capacities in the Pacific Islands”](#), [Inform’ACTION n° 29](#), September 2008, including testimonies from Vanuatu, Nauru and Kiribati.

Fiji Islands shared its experience with PPHSN members by writing an article on [“Improvements in infection control at Colonial War Memorial Hospital in Fiji”](#) published in [Inform’ACTION n° 29](#), September 2008.

An infection control workshop and drill exercise was organised in Cook Islands (more information in the article [“Cook Islands infection control workshop and drill exercise”](#) published in [Inform’ACTION n° 30](#), April 2009.

Posters on Infection control were produced : sequence for putting on and removing personal protective equipment, wash your hands and infection control in health care facilities (see [Inform’ACTION n°28](#), page 34).

2010 [PPHSN Infection Prevention and Control \(IPC\) Guideline](#) was published.

2013 In May 2013, the PPHSN IPC guideline was reviewed, and changes were made (pages 53 and 89) regarding disinfection of instruments and equipment with chlorine solution.

2016 PPHSN Infection Prevention and Control Guideline was revised.

Training workshops on infection control were organised in Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

2020-2023 Technical advice and guidance documents for in infection prevention and control were produced for PICTs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic through the Pacific Joint Incident Management Team. The following documents are accessible on SPC's Public Health Division website at [COVID19 Infection Prevention & Control | SPC Public Health Division](#):

- [COVID-19 Guidance on Environmental Cleaning for Healthcare Facilities](#)
- [Pacific-Adapted Guidance on Rationale use of Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\)](#)
- [Guidance on Protecting Cargo Handlers form the Potential Risk of COVID-19](#)
- [Advisory – Home-made Cloth Mask](#)
- [Care of the deceased with suspected or confirmed COVID-19](#)
- [A3 Poster 1 Contact Precautions](#)
- [A3 Poster 2 Droplet Precautions](#)
- [A3 Poster 3 Airborne Precautions](#)
- [A3 Poster 4 Contact and Droplet Precautions](#)
- [COVID-19 guidance environmental on cleaning for healthcare facilities](#)
- [COVID-19 Environmental Cleaning Audit Tool](#)
- [Infection Prevention and Control \(IPC\) Healthcare Worker \(HCW\) Training: Environmental Cleaning](#)
- [Sequence for putting on Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\)](#)
- [Sequence for removing Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\)](#)
- [Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) competency checklist - Putting on and removing PPE](#)
- [Infection prevention and control in COVID-19 vaccination clinics](#)

[PPHSN Infection Prevention and Control Guideline](#) has been updated in 2021.

Two animated videos were produced:

- [Putting on and removing PPE for airborne precautions for COVID-19](#) accessible on YouTube
- [Putting on and removing PPE for Contact and Droplet Precautions for COVID-19](#) accessible on YouTube

3. Thanks to all PPHSN member countries, allied members and partners who have contributed to the development of PICNet and the other five services of PPHSN over the years:

PPHSN core members – Ministries/Department of Health of the 22 Pacific Island countries and territories:

American Samoa	Northern Mariana Islands
Cook Islands	Palau
Federated States of Micronesia	Papua New Guinea
Fiji	Pitcairn Islands
French Polynesia	Samoa
Guam	Solomon Islands
Kiribati	Tokelau
Marshall Islands	Tonga
Nauru	Tuvalu
New Caledonia	Vanuatu
Niue	Wallis and Futuna

PPHSN allied members

- U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (U.S. CDC)
- College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, Fiji National University
- Communicable Diseases Network Australia/New Zealand (CDNA)
- Hawaii State Department of Health
- Hunter New England Local Health District Population Health (HNE)
- Institute of Environmental Science and Research Limited (ESR)
- International Network of Pasteur Institutes and Associate Institutes
- James Cook University (JCU)
- Institut Louis Malardé (ILM), Papeete, Tahiti, French Polynesia
- Micronesian Human Resources Development Center
- National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health / Australian National University (NCEPH/ANU)
- Fiji Centre for Communicable Disease (Mataika House)
- Pacific Basin Medical Association (PBMA)
- Pacific Health Research Council (PHRC)
- Pasteur Institute of New Caledonia (IPNC)
- Pacific Island Health Officers Association (PIHOA)
- Pacific Paramedical Training Centre, New Zealand (PPTC)
- Training Programms in Epidemiology and Public Health Interventions Network (TEPHINET)
- Pacific Community (SPC)
- UNICEF
- Western Pacific HealthNet
- World Health Organization (WHO)

Regional partners

- Australian College for Infection Prevention and Control
- Guam Public Health Laboratory
- Lab Plus, New Zealand
- PacMOSSI Consortium
- National Serology Reference Laboratory, Melbourne (NRL)
- Queensland Health Forensic Scientific Services (QHFSS)
- Queensland Mycobacterium Reference Laboratory (QMRL)
- Queensland Medical Laboratories (QML)
- Victoria Infectious Diseases Reference Laboratory (VIDRL)
- WHO Arbovirus Reference Centre (QUT)
- WHO-Collaborating Center for Influenza (WHO-CC)

Funding agencies

- Agence française de développement (AFD)
- Asian Development Bank (ADB)
- Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)
- European Union (EU)
- Fonds Pacifique / French Pacific Fund
- German Government Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW)
- New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT)
- U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (U.S.CDC)
- U.S State Department

3. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

PICNet communication

4. A discussion list entitled PICNet, similar to PacNet (the alert and communication list of PPHSN), was created at the very beginning of PICNet to facilitate exchanges of information and experiences between infection prevention and control professionals in the Pacific but it has been used very little. This list has been deactivated, but it could be reactivated if need be. The PPHSN website, newly revamped [Pacific Public Health Surveillance Network - \(pphsn.net\)](#), could also be used to facilitate sharing of information, documents and/or experiences through stories.