

# Pacific Heads of Nursing & Midwifery Meeting

## Réunion des directeurs des soins infirmiers et obstétricaux du Pacifique

### **NURSES TOGETHER: A FORCE FOR GLOBAL HEALTH**

14 – 16 November 2023, Tanoa International Hotel, Nadi, Fiji

### **Recommendations from the Pacific Islands Perioperative Operating Room Nurses Association (PIORNA) Inaugural Meeting**

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Agenda Item N° 4.2

Perioperative nursing in the Pacific Islands Countries and Territories (PICTs) has developed significantly over the last six years. Key milestones include the publication of the first edition of Pacific Perioperative Standards Manual and the first cohort nurses enrolled in the graduate certificate in perioperative nursing to graduate towards the end 2022.

Other significant achievements include: the formation of the only regional nursing specialty group the Pacific Islands Perioperative Operating Room Nurses Association (PIORNA); the development of a pacific regional mentoring network and widening perioperative networks; and the implementation of the inaugural conference and annual general meeting for PIORNA.

## 1. BACKGROUND

Perioperative nursing in the Pacific Islands Countries and Territories (PICTs) has developed significantly over the last six years. One important development is the establishment of the Pacific Islands Operating Room Nursing Association (PIORNA) which was registered in Samoa in 2019 and subsequently confirmed as a member to the International Federation of Perioperative Nursing (IFPN) in 2018. Membership comprises operating room nurses from 14 PICTs - Cook Islands, Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

Since that time, key milestones have been reached including the Pacific Practice Standards Manual (available online on praxhub through Interplast website) for consistency of perioperative practice in the Pacific, development of a pacific regional mentoring network and widening perioperative networks, and ongoing sponsorship of PICTs for post-graduate certificate in perioperative nursing education.

## 2. PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### 2.1 The Inaugural Conference

The Inaugural Conference for PIORNA 2023 was conducted in Apia, Samoa from November 1 – 3 with the theme of “Uniting the Pacific through Nursing Excellence”. Eight (8) being successfully presented on the conference. Panel sessions of three (3) different topics were designed to seek perspectives on the need for the PIORNA society, collaboration of three (3) main perioperative sections to ensure sustainability of the perioperative standards as well as promoting participants knowledge and awareness on the essence of research in perioperative nursing. There were three additional papers of which two (2) were about University (Fiji National University (FNU) and National University of Samoa (NUS)) perspectives of current and future plans for offering post graduate courses for perioperative nursing in PICTs. The National Surgical Obstetric and Anaesthesia Plan (NSOAP) 2020-2030 was also presented to increase awareness of perioperative nurses of their contribution to the plan.

Many nurses from around the Pacific were able to attend the conference through the help of sponsors including: The Pacific Community (SPC), Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS), Pasifika

Medical Association (PMA), World Health Organisation (WHO), Government of Samoa – Ministry of Health, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the Samoa Registered Nurses Association (SRNA) and Interplast.

## **2.2 The Annual General Meeting (AGM)**

The AGM was conducted by the interim committee (from 2018 to 2023) at the Tanoa Tusitala Hotel conference room in Apia at 1200 hours on November 3<sup>rd</sup>. There was a silent moment dedicated in loving memory of Ms. Asenati Natini of Fiji. The presidents report of PIORNA development from 2018 – 2023 was discussed and approved. The discussion of the constitution for members awareness was conducted and copies were distributed for PIORNA members. The PIORNA Strategic Plan 2024-2029 was also approved followed by explanation and discussion of the financial report for PIORNA which was also approved with the expectation of full audited report to be discussed at the next AGM. The election of the new PIORNA Board through ballot was successful with the help of Menna Davies as an autonomous honourable member of PIORNA.

## **3. CHALLENGES**

### **3.1 Geography, diversity, and remoteness**

The Pacific islands are some of the most remote and geographical dispersed islands. They are also very diverse in the level of perioperative services provided. The smaller PICTS provide basic operating rooms services as most of their major surgeries are conducted overseas to the larger PICTS who can provide specialised surgery. Maintaining a nurses skill set to assist in a wide range of surgeries can be very difficult when these surgeries are not routinely provided in some hospitals.

### **3.2 Communication and reliable internet services**

Many of PICTs still have unreliable yet very expensive internet services. The importance of good communication and a reliable internet service was revealed during the COVID-19 pandemic. The closure of borders made PICTs rely heavily on good communication and reliable internet services for consultation, management and treatment and continuing nursing education.

## 4. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

### 4.1 Recommendations for governments:

- 4.1.1 Promote implementation of Pacific Islands Operating Room Nurses Association (PIORNA) standards and analyse compliance through collation of audit results.
- 4.1.2 To support exchange programs (mentorship) of perioperative nurses to help maintain and upgrade nursing skills set in operating theatres.
- 4.1.3 To include education in post graduate studies in perioperative nursing with financial support for scholarships.
- 4.1.4 To support the development for hospital-based learning centres with reliable internet services for online learning and access to continuing professional development.

### 4.2 Recommendations for development partners:

- 4.2.1 To support plan of creating new PIORNA standards and audit tools and review standards.
- 4.2.2 To support PIORNA in developing relationships with appropriate education institutions.
- 4.2.3 To support the development of PIORNA to grow under the guidance of a well-established organisation (for example Australian College of Operating Room Nurses (ACORN) / IFPN).
- 4.2.4 To support PIORNA in conducting and publishing perioperative nursing research.