

Training Directors Report.

25th February 2024

Talofa, Kiora, Bula vinaka, Mauri, Gudfala evening and warm welcome to all the PIOA Members and Trainees who are able to join in our virtual AGM. On behalf of the Training Committee, I would like to thank everyone for continuously availing your time and energy in keeping our goals and mission going in providing quality orthopedic care in the pacific region.

Firstly, I would like to extend our big appreciation to PIOA members and Friends who have continued to render their expertise towards our ongoing training: the weekly Sunday Zoom sessions and our PIOA training modules.

We would also like to thank our partners who have helped funded our Module training and other clinical assistance this far: the Wyss Global Health Foundation/ AO Alliance/ South Pacific Medical Project/ SPC (Pacific Community) and Orthopacifix NZ.

In 2023, we were able to return to the norm of hosting two module meetings in a year. Our first Module meeting for this year was held in Apia, Samoa from 13th March to 1st April 2023. During this meeting, we covered three (3) modules: Paediatrics, Tumor and Infection/ Inflammation/ Professional Topics. We had 13 PIOA Trainees to this Module meeting namely: Dr Naseri Aitaoto from American Samoa; Dr Clay Siosi & Dr Agnes Auto from Solomon Islands; Dr Reshwin Rajan & Dr Pauliasi Bauleka from Fiji; Dr Viola, Dr Jacqueline Pahun , Dr Anthony Nasai, Dr Tommy Walters, Dr Kevin Lapu & Dr Haynes from PNG and Dr Julio Piedade & Dr Juvencio Diaz from East Timor.

We celebrated the 10th year of our training program during this Module meeting with the graduation of Dr Areta Samuelu (Samoa) and Dr Pita Sovanivalu (Fiji) with a Master of Surgery (Orthopaedics) from the National University of Samoa.

Our second Module meeting was held in Suva, Fiji from the 11th to 29th September 2023 during which two modules were covered: Knee module and the Foot & Ankle module. These two modules were attended by five (5) PIOA Trainees: Dr Agnes Auto from Solomon Islands, Dr Jacqueline Pahun and Dr Thomas Kiele from Papua New Guinea, Dr. Pauliasi Bauleka from Fiji and Dr Julio Piedade from East Timor.

In addition to this second Module meeting, we held our Fourth PIOA Exit Exams for our three (3) final year candidates from the 25th to 29th September 2023 at the CWM Hospital. The

three PIOA candidates who sat for the exit exams include: Dr Raymond Saulep from Papua New Guinea, Dr Clay Siosi from Solomon Islands and Dr Naseri Aitaoto from American Samoa. Only two of the candidates passed their exams qualifying them for a Fellow of the Pacific Islands Orthopaedic association and a Master of Surgery (Orthopaedics) from the National University of Samoa in 2024 – Dr Clay Siosi and Dr Naseri Aitaoto.

Dr Raymond Saulep didn't make it through and he can resit the exit exams in 2024.

Three external examiners were brought in to facilitate the exit exams namely: Dr Richard Lander from Palmerston North New Zealand who's the chief Examiner and Dr John North from Brisbane Australia and Dr David Bartle from New Zealand were two of his assistants. Two of our graduates Dr Areta Samuelu from Samoa and Dr James Leslie Tewa'ani from Solomon Islands, were invited as exam Observers during the weeklong examination process as part of succession planning for PIOA.

In between the Module meetings, we do have weekly Sunday lectures on common orthopaedic and trauma pathologies in preparation for the upcoming modules as has been since the COVID 19 pandemic.

Having done the modules this year, Dr Jacqueline Pahun from PNG attended the AOA Annual Scientific meeting in Melbourne Australia in November 2023 and presented an excellent paper on Vacuum dressing comparing locally made vs manufactured.

In the same meeting, our President, Dr Shaun Mauiliu presented on PIOA update and TENS experience in Samoa and Dr Stephen Kodovaru presented on 10 year PONSETI experience in Solomon Islands and Orthopaedic involvement in a Local Post Graduate Rural Medicine program.

Dr Naseri Aitaoto and Dr Reswhin Rajan are currently doing their attachment in New Zealand and we would like to thank them for continuing to be good ambassadors for the PIOA program. We do continue to encourage our Trainees to go for attachments overseas to gain more knowledge and experience which would be immensely beneficial to our various home countries.

While Dr Stephen Kodovaru commenced his Paediatric Orthopaedic attachment in Brisbane in August 2023 and will progress for a year.

Dr Clay Siosi did a four (4) weeks attachment focusing more on the Upper limb in 3 Hand and Plastics Centers in the USA from 21st November to 22nd December 2023. Though short, he has found this attachment very helpful and has developed good relationships and networks.

Overall, we have 22 Trainees and all at different levels of the program with: 12 from PNG, 2 from Solomon Islands, 2 from East Timor, 1 from FSM, 1 from Cook Island, 3 from Fiji and 1 from Kiribati. Five of them can sit for the Exit Exams in 2024 having completed their modules.

I would like to introduce our five new Trainees for this year: Dr. Manoa Valeniyasana from Fiji; Dr. Robert Fa'ataga from Samoa; Dr. Oralae Pitakia and Dr. Jeffrey Yiapi from Solomon Island and Dr. Tzun Rafael from Palau.

In other developments, during the second module in Suva, Fiji, Dr. Desmond Soares, our Deputy Director of Training had very fruitful and progressive discussions with the University of Fiji Vice Chancellor following an invitation by Dr. Waqainabete from the University of Fiji – Medical Faculty towards a Master of Orthopaedic Surgery accreditation. It is now at its final stages and we do hope to have it finalized by this year – 2024.

Our next two modules for this year are as follows: Introduction and Trauma modules will be held in Suva, Fiji from 4th to 16th March 2024; and the Upper Limb, Research modules and exit exams are to be held in Apia, Samoa from the 16th to 28th September 2024.

To conclude, we would like to encourage all us to make use of these opportunities from our different faculty members during the module meetings, zoom lectures and overseas attachments to further enrich our orthopedic knowledge and skills.

On behalf of the training committee we would like to thank you all for your tireless effort in continuing support to Orthopaedic and Trauma training in the Pacific Region. We look forward to the new year and the challenges ahead.



Dr. James Leslie Tewa'ani
PIOA Training Director