

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To minimise the risk of infectious diseases in the University community.
- 1.2 Ensure staff and students are aware of the issues related to infectious diseases.
- 1.3 Provide guidelines to minimise the risk of contracting infectious diseases, and to deal with a disease if contracted.

2. Scope

- 2.1 Fiji National University has a duty of care to provide and maintain a healthy and safe environment for all staff, students and others working at or visiting its facilities, and to minimise the risk of anyone in the University community contracting an infectious disease.
- 2.2 The University will support and protect from discrimination and harassment of any students, staff or others who have an infectious disease.
- 2.3 The University will safeguard the privacy of any staff, student or other person who discloses that they have an infectious disease.
- 2.4 While the majority of occupational and educational duties within the University pose little risk of transmission, the University recognizes that some staff and students are at a higher risk of contracting an infectious disease.
- 2.5 These personnel include health care and first aid workers, College of Medical, Nursing and Health Sciences staffs and students on attachments & practical, cleaners, grounds staff, maintenance staff (plumbing, air conditioning system work), food handlers, staff working with young children, laboratory staff working with infectious organisms and with animals, and some field staff.

3. Responsibility

Routine Responsibilities

- 3.1 All employees of Fiji National University must be familiar with the relevant requirements of this procedure.
- 3.2 College Deans, HODs and Directors with area responsibilities must ensure that:
 - the requirement of this procedure have been implemented and are being maintained in their campus
 - Relevant OHS members of their staff are to be released for the University wide emergency.
- 3.3 All Health care providers and Workplace OHS Committee [WOHSC] Chairpersons bears the responsibilities for specific campuses.

- 3.4 The Manager HR is responsible for:

- Developing, implementing and maintaining this procedure and related documents.
- Developing and conducting training sessions for the implementation of FNU wide procedure for Supervisors, Managers, Health and Safety Representatives and first aiders.
- Advise supervisors and managers in the implementation of this procedure.

- 3.5 The Director Properties & Facilities is responsible for providing and updating Emergency Evacuation upon request from the Portfolios with HR division.

- 3.6 The Workplace Occupational Health and Safety Committee [WOHSC] are responsible for:

- Monitoring the development of site emergency instructions with area of responsibilities.

- 3.7 The Registrar – Student services is responsible for developing, implementing and maintaining internal procedures for the provision of counseling and related support services for emergencies to students.

- 3.8 It is the responsibilities of supervisors to ensure that all practicable steps are taken to ensure those at risk are protected.

- 3.9 It is also the responsibility of each employee to maintain a high standard of work practice in this regard.

- 3.10 It is expected that staff, students or others exposed to any risk of an infectious disease will follow the procedures of the University's Workplace Health and Safety Manual and the relevant School or unit's specialised health and safety manuals and guidelines.

- 3.11 Managers are responsible for:

- Advising staff about evacuation plans

- 3.12 HSE , HR-Welfare unit and Health Care Providers will form a taskforce to:

- Conduct meetings
- Provide updates of situations to management
- Request for medical assistance from Ministry of Health
- Evacuate, isolate or assist staffs and students during the outbreak

4. Definitions

- 4.1 Communicable Disease - an infectious disease transmissible (as from person to person) by direct contact with an affected individual or the individual's discharges or by indirect means (as by a vector)
- 4.2 AIDS: Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
- 4.3 FCCDC: Fiji Center for Communicable Disease Control
- 4.4 FNCDSO: Fiji National CD Surveillance Outbreak

- 4.5 HCP: Health Care Provider
- 4.6 HSE: Health, Safety & Environment.

5. Procedures

- 5.1 Staff and students with an infectious disease have a duty of care to minimize the risk of transmission to other members of the University community by informing supervisors in a timely manner.
- 5.2 Where deemed appropriate by their supervisors, higher-risk staff will be offered the relevant vaccination at the University's expense.
- 5.3 Staff not wishing to be vaccinated for personal or other reasons must sign a form stating that they understand why vaccination is being offered, and the potential health effects of being exposed to body fluids or infectious organisms.
- 5.4 It is expected that staff, students or others exposed to any risk of an infectious disease will follow the procedures of the University's Workplace Health and Safety Manual Infection Precautions and the relevant School or unit's specialised health and safety manuals and guidelines.

Notification:

- 5.5 Any staff or student that is suspected or confirmed to have any form of infectious disease must inform the HR office and HCP and supervisor. OHS incident/disease form shall be filled. Failing this, the staff/student will be liable for disciplinary action and may face prosecution under the PUBLIC HEALTH ACT. HCP & HSE will monitor the patient and inform the relevant authorities within and outside FNU that will need this information.
- 5.6 All patient records shall be kept confidential.
Risk Management Planning – Preparation of Taskforce
- 5.7 Pandemic preparedness plans = risk management planning. Impact of absenteeism, social distancing, etc.
Pandemic Task force activities
 - 5.7.1 Conduct Stakeholder meetings under NDMO.
 - 5.7.2 Intensify Public education through mass media and print.
 - 5.7.3 Inventory of medical equipment, PPEs and antiviral
 - 5.7.4 Advocacy with other govt. meetings. E.g. Ministry of Education – Focal group.
 - 5.7.5 Regular updating of the workforce through internal channels of communication.
 - 5.7.6 Opportunities for awareness within govt. departments on personal protection and community mitigation.
 - 5.7.7 Social distancing -cancellation of large public lectures/gatherings; changing workplace environments and schedules to decrease social density, etc.
 - 5.7.8 Effective communication with employees and stakeholders on essential services.
 - 5.7.9 Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

Exceptions:

- 5.8 These procedures also apply to staff and students within colleges or organisational units with specific infectious disease or immunisation policies.
- 5.9 Fiji National University staff and students may be involved in teaching or research activities that bring them into contact with infectious organisms responsible for diseases for which vaccines are available. Staff and students in other high-risk courses or those carrying out projects with a high risk are encouraged to be immunised where appropriate, using as a guideline the current edition of the FNCDSO Handbook, which can be accessed at <http://www.health.gov.fj>
- 5.10 Persons undertaking high risk activities shall be provided with information or biosafety training commensurate with the activity and the relevant safe practices, standards and guidelines. This policy also compliments the Infection policy observed in specific work sites such as hospital that also strictly observe Universal Precaution Guidelines and Protocol on accidental needle stick injuries.
- 5.11 The University will promote informed awareness, tolerance and understanding by students, staff and others of the issues and concerns in relation to infectious diseases, by ensuring that information relating to infectious diseases is widely distributed and well publicised throughout the University community.

6. Personal Protection

- 6.1 When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.
- 6.2 Stay home when you suspect that you are sick from an infectious disease. You will need certification of a registered medical practitioner. If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.
- 6.3 Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.
- 6.4 Clean your hands regularly. Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs.
- 6.5 Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.
- 6.6 Practice other good health habits. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

7. High risk activities include:

- 7.1 Handling of human blood and blood products
- 7.2 Handling of human faeces or intestinal contents
- 7.3 Handling of infectious organisms associated with human disease
- 7.4 Exposure to patients excreting organisms likely to infect the staff and students
- 7.5 Exposure to ruminant foetuses, placentae or uterine contents

- 7.6 Exposure to wild caught or infected biting arthropods
- 7.7 Exposure to wildlife especially bats
- 7.8 Travel to locations where there is a high risk of infections
- 7.9 Grounds and cleaning duties which could result in accidental needle stick injury
- 7.10 Maintenance of sewage facilities
- 7.11 High-risk groups include:
 - 7.11.1 Academic and technical staff, and students in Medicine, Public Health and Tropical Medicine, Pharmacy, Nursing Sciences, Biomedical Sciences, Occupational Therapy, Sports and Exercise Science, Child-Care, Early Childhood Education, Psychology, and Biological Sciences.
 - 7.11.2 Academic, technical, and research staff and graduate students whose research project includes a high-risk activity.
 - 7.11.3 Cleaning and maintenance staffs who may come into contact with human bodily fluids directly or via accidental needle stick injury.
 - 7.11.4 First Aid officers

8. Appropriate vaccines may include:

- 8.1 Tetanus
- 8.2 Hepatitis A
- 8.3 Hepatitis B
- 8.4 BCG (Tuberculosis)
- 8.5 Q Fever

9. Baseline antibody samples

- 9.1 Blood samples to determine baseline antibody levels are normally only collected on the recommendation of a supervisor or Biosafety Officer for teaching staff, or persons involved in research projects, where there is a specific risk to address.
- 9.2 The storage of baseline serum samples will incur a cost which will be borne by the Academic Unit.

10. Additional diagnostic tests

- 10.1 Staff and students who are likely to come to contact with *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* or patients who may be excreting *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* are required to undergo testing using the tuberculin test.
- 10.2 The results of the test will be supplied to the student and the student will be advised on the appropriate course of action which needs to be taken. The tuberculin test results will remain confidential. However, if the student chooses to inform the Biosafety Officer of the results they will be recorded for future reference.

11. Vaccination

- 11.1 Vaccination will be recommended based on the results of serological testing, other diagnostic tests, or on the basis of a risk assessment.

12. Tetanus

- 12.1 All staff and students undertaking field trips are encouraged to be vaccinated for tetanus or where a recent booster vaccination has been applied the student will be asked to supply details of the vaccination.

13. Hepatitis A

- 13.1 All staff and students exposed to human faeces or intestinal contents, especially child-care workers and plumbing maintenance staff, are advised to

undergo a course vaccination for hepatitis A unless the serological results suggest that the person already has a sufficiently high titre to provide a protective immunity.

14. Hepatitis B

- 14.1 All staff and students exposed to human blood or human blood products, or risk-assessed duties are advised to undergo a course of vaccination for hepatitis B unless the serological results suggest that the person already has a sufficiently high titre to provide a protective immunity.

15. Q Fever

- 15.1 Staff and students exposed to ruminant foetuses, placentae or uterine contents may be infected with Q fever. The risk of infection will be discussed with the staff or students and where appropriate vaccination will be recommended.

16. Tuberculosis

- 16.1 Staff and students who were likely to be exposed to the organism *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* or patients infected with tuberculosis as part of their teaching or research activities will be advised to undergo testing and on the results of the testing will be advised to seek vaccination with BCG vaccine on the basis of the test results and risk assessment.

17. Other vaccines

- 17.1 Specific research projects might place a student at risk of becoming infected with organisms for which a vaccine is available. These may include organisms such as rabies, Japanese encephalitis and yellow fever. A full risk assessment will be carried out and vaccination recommended where appropriate.

18. Field trips and overseas activities

- 18.1 It is recommended that field and practice manuals contain comments on immunization consistent with the this Policy and Immunization Guidelines. Staff and students undertaking overseas trips should consult their physician.

19. Costs of vaccination, testing and sample storage

- 19.1 Costs for the collection and storage of baseline serum samples will be borne by the Academic Unit in which student are enrolled. Staff may be vaccinated by the Government Medical Officer. Arrangements for the vaccination of groups of staff can be made by liaising with the FNU HCP.
- 19.2 Research staff or students who are required to undergo vaccination with a vaccine which is particularly expensive may discuss the funding of the vaccination with the supervisor.

20. Novel strain of Influenza A (H1N1) [Swine Flu]

- 20.1 What is the new strain of Influenza A (H1N1)?
 - Influenza (H1N1) - earlier referred to as “swine flu” is a new influenza virus that is now causing illness in people.
 - This new virus is made up of a mixture of human,

bird and swine influenza. Hence it is different from the usual seasonal Influenza virus.

- It is the first time that such a virus that has parts of other species begins to spread from humans to humans.

How is it spread?

- Directly spread from person to person through droplets or mucous from the nose/mouth when coughing and sneezing.
- Indirectly through surfaces (tables, door handles, etc.) that has some mucous with the virus in it.
- virus may persist on hard surfaces for 1-2 days, particularly in cold or low humidity conditions
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The Swine flu is similar in symptoms and spread the same way as seasonal influenza that we experience every year during the cold or winter season. This new 'flu' virus is directly spread from person-to-person through droplets or mucous from the mouth and nose when coughing, sneezing, etc. It is indirectly spread by touching surfaces with the mucous and virus such as tables, door handles, shaking hands, sharing unwashed drinking utensils, etc. followed by touching one's own nose or mouth can result in an infection.

20.2 What is important about Influenza A (H1N1) or Swine Flu?

- Immunity to the human population was not known.
- Mostly 'mild symptoms' but highly infectious.
- Complications & death amongst the young & healthy age groups in Mexico.
- WHO declared novel strain of Influenza A (H1N1) a pandemic: 12th June, 2009.
- Potential to affect society & economy – overwhelm health services, absenteeism from work, school closures, etc.



ACTING VICE CHANCELLOR 2015.

POLICY ADOPTED: 2015