

FNUUNIKUA



PROMOTING A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

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FNU embarks on a mission to combat cancer and non-communicable diseases



The Fiji National University (FNU) has strengthened its commitment towards developing a positive work and study environment for its staff and students by undertaking several health and wellness initiatives across all its major campuses.

The University has also adopted the Ministry of Health guidelines for healthy eating, in all food supplied by the University to staff.

“We are committed to taking a more proactive approach to improving the health status of our staff and students,” said FNU Vice Chancellor Professor Healey.

VC Healey said that management have also agreed with the University Council to provide free and comprehensive medical insurance to all staff from 1 January 2019.

Free Medical Screening

The free medical screening for staff was conducted in the central, western and northern division over a two-week period.

There was a similar screening conducted for students at selected campuses earlier in the year. Given the success of the medical screening exercise, it will now become an annual event.

“We carried out the annual health screening for all staff, on a rolling, campus-by-campus basis. This involved wellness and NCD screening for blood pressure, cholesterol, BMI, etc, breast cancer screening, blood tests for prostate cancer and health promotion,” said Professor Healey.

“Women who were identified at elevated risk of breast cancer were offered mammograms. Staff with conditions that were detected in the health screening were referred to the public health care system for further investigation and (where necessary) treatment.”

“Although we have focused in this first phase on screening for, and the prevention of, NCDs and cancers, we understand the centrality that reproductive health plays in the health status of the nation. As a university, we are taking lead in the sexual education of our students and the promotion of safe sex,” the VC added.

During last year’s Pinktober Seminar to raise awareness of breast cancer, which was organised at the College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS), there was considerable discussion about what the University – as the premier medical training institution in the Pacific Islands – should be doing to more proactively promote the health of its staff.

It was agreed during this seminar that the CMNHS should develop a plan to carry out annual health checks for all staff, to identify those at risk of developing type 2 diabetes, breast cancer and prostate cancer.

“In this way, FNU is providing national leadership in the fight against NCDs and cancer. It is only one small step. Reversing the incidence of NCDs and cancer requires lifestyle changes in food consumption, alcohol and tobacco use and more frequent exercise. But screening staff for the commonest causes of premature death, and in so doing raising awareness of the importance of taking responsibility for your own health, has a key role to play,” said VC Healey.

Wellness Centre

The University has also designed and begun the tender process for the construction of a gymnasium at Nasinu Campus for recreational sport and exercise for staff and students.

The eight-million dollar Complex will consist of cardio training, rehab, cross-fit and weightlifting, circuit machine stations and indoor running for testing and fitness.

Professor Healey said this was an important step for the University in establishing a comprehensive set of sports and wellness facilities across FNU Campuses.

The Complex will be benchmarked on international standards on space, energy efficiency, and disability friendliness with sustainable standards.

“We are starting with Nasinu campus where the intention is to roll this out and its part of both enhancing the student life experience on campus and also our commitment to the development of health status of our staff,” commented VC Healey.

“There are two goals of this Complex. First is to provide students with modern equipment and facilities to support learning and fully prepare them for a successful career in their chosen fields and second is to provide staff and students with equipment and facilities to support their health and wellness.”

“The University provides programmes such as Exercise Prescription, Health and Awareness, Biomechanics, Exercise Physiology, Performance Testing, Analysis and Feedback and this well-equipped facility will be great for student practicals,” Professor Healey added.

This project will also boost research in sports science, physiotherapy and rehabilitation.



FNU Vice Chancellor, Professor Nigel Healey made these comments at a symposium organised by the Pacific Society for the Reproductive Health in Suva.

Cancer patients must seek immediate medical treatment

– Dr Munshi



Assistant Professor General Surgery at FNU, Dr Basharat Munshi.

Early presentation leads to greater survival success. Assistant Professor General Surgery at the Fiji National University (FNU), Dr Basharat Munshi said in his experience, a high number of breast cancer cases presented at hospitals are not only presented late but also patients having seen non-medical experts which does not help them.

“There is so much awareness regarding the facilities available for treatment of breast and cervical cancer but we do regularly come across cases where patients have tried to use traditional medicine to heal. This further adds to the problem and places the patient at greater risk,” said Dr Munshi.

Dr Munshi, who is a Consultant General Surgeon at the Colonial War Memorial Hospital (CWMH) in Suva, said on average three hundred cases of Breast Cancer is recorded annually.

“There are three of us at CWM Hospital who conduct Breast Cancer operations and that’s Doctor Waqa, Doctor Josese and I. So on average, we have one elective list a week which means all of us would be doing at least one to two breast cancer operations a week. So there are around 10 to 15 mastectomies every month here in Suva,” Dr Munshi said.

“Overall we conduct at least one hundred and fifty breast cancer operations at the CWM Hospital alone,” Dr Munshi added.

Traditionally, Breast Cancer has been known to affect elderly women but Dr Munshi said it affects women of all ages.

“In Fiji, our experience is that the patients are getting younger and younger. Average woman with breast cancer is between 40-50 years old,” explained Dr Munshi.

Not so long ago, Cervical Cancer was the most common type of cancer among Fijian women, however in the recent past, Breast Cancer has taken its toll.

Latest statistics from the World Health Organisation (WHO) revealed that 87 females, diagnosed with Cervical Cancer died in Fiji last year which was 1.52 percent of the total deaths in the country.

The same report also highlighted that Breast Cancer death in Fiji reached 119 or 2.07 percent of total deaths last year.

Breast cancer is a cancer that forms in the cells of the breasts. It can occur in both men and women, but it’s far more common in women.

Reports show that the youngest Breast Cancer patient in Fiji was 18 years old.

Generally, as women grow older, the risk of developing breast cancer increases.

Dr Munshi said for a woman the biggest risk factor for them is being a woman itself.

“Women have exposure to the hormone called Estrogen. Estrogen is a necessary hormone. It’s what makes woman a woman and it is very necessary, but the longer you are exposed to Estrogen in your life, the higher the risk of you developing breast cancer,” he said.

Some of the other factors are, late menstruation, or having the first child at a very advanced age.

In some cases, Breast Cancer is hereditary and Dr Munshi highlighted that this accounts to only five percent of the total number of Breast Cancer cases.

“When we diagnose Breast Cancer, first of all it’s taking some tissues out of the breast and giving it to our pathologist to have a look and confirm. If it is localized within the breast, then there are few treatments we must do for the patient to be fully cured. This involves surgery which involves taking out the breast as a whole, chemotherapy or hormonal therapy,” said Dr Munshi.

If incase the cancer has spread outside of the breast than it cannot be cured. Dr Munshi said in such cases they resort to palliation.

Palliative treatment is relieving symptoms to improve someone’s life. It can be used at any stage of an illness if there are troubling symptoms such as pain or sickness. It can also be used to reduce or control the side effects of cancer treatments.

Dr Munshi said Breast Cancer treatment can take up to many months, especially if there’s chemotherapy involved.

“If you are a woman, you should do regular self-examination of the breast. If you feel a lump please do not hide it, don’t go to the neighbor, witchdoctor or village traditional healer for advice. Instead come to a medical facility and be examined by a health professional so that we can identify the disease early,” said Dr Munshi.

Effective policies are critical in tackling Fiji's growing health problems

– Professor Mohammadnezhad



Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is one of the most common forms of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) which is the leading cause of death and ill health in the world today.

CVD includes coronary heart disease, stroke and other vascular disease such as peripheral arterial disease.

To give an idea about the seriousness of this problem, according to World Health Organisation (WHO) report, an estimated 17.7 million people died from CVDs in 2015, representing 31 percent of all global deaths. Of these deaths, an estimated 7.4 million were due to coronary artery disease and 6.7 million were due to stroke.

Over three quarters of the CVD deaths take place in low-middle income countries. When we look at the local scenario, data published in May 2014 by WHO stated coronary heart disease deaths in Fiji reached 1,294 or 24.23 percent of total deaths.

The report also stated the age-adjusted death rate as 207.72 per 100,000-population and Fiji ranks 19th in the world out of 172 countries with regards to death rate.

An Associate Professor at the Fiji National University's School of Public Health and Primary Care, Dr Masoud Mohammadnezhad believes in order to combat the rise in any health issue, it is paramount to determine the risk factors in order to develop policies and measures.

"Thirty years ago, there was so much focus on communicable diseases but recently we have also seen a lot of lifestyle changes. With the change in lifestyle, we now have new health issues in the form of non-communicable diseases which have taken the health sector by storm," said Professor Mohammadnezhad.

"NCDs are now the reason for major mortality rates around the world. To find the solution as to how we can combat this problem, we need to first know what knowledge the population has about these diseases, what is their attitude towards the current lifestyle and what are the practices that may be putting their health at risk."

Professor Mohammadnezhad, who is also the coordinator of Health Promotion at FNU, said Fiji's ranking in cardiovascular disease was appalling and it is important to find out the level of knowledge, attitude and practice (KAP) among the population in order to determine their risk of suffering from CVD in future.

To understand the level of KAP towards CVD and their determinants in Fiji, Professor Mohammadnezhad, who is based at FNU's College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS), conducted a research among adults attending Accident and Emergency Unit of Colonial War Memorial Hospital (CWMH) in Suva.

The research was conducted among 450 adults from January to December last year.

The mean age of participants was 50.7 (plus or minus 7.9 years) where more than half of the participants or 53 percent were females and 51 percent i-taukei.

About 42 percent of participants had secondary level of education and were mostly employed (63.6 percent). The study showed that one-third of participants (25.3 percent) had low level of knowledge. Employment status, level of income and level of education were predictors of participants' knowledge.

Sixty-six percent had negative attitude while about half of them (49.6 percent) had poor practice towards CVD prevention. Income, level of education and urban/rural residence were predictors of participants' attitude.

Study showed that television was the main source of knowledge (60.2 percent) while 9.6 percent of respondents answered that physician or health care workers were the source of knowledge.

Professor Mohammadnezhad said this study also reflected on the problem of obesity where about 68 percent participants were overweight or obese.

He said the data collected on KAP highlights the need to educate Fijians on the best practices towards CVD prevention and to change their negative attitudes.

The effects of behavioral risk factors may show up in individuals as raised blood pressure, raised blood glucose, raised blood lipids, and overweight and obesity. He said most CVDs can be prevented by addressing behavioral risk factors such as tobacco use, unhealthy diet and obesity, physical inactivity and harmful use of alcohol using population-wide strategies.

"Although the study shows that only one-third of participants had low level of knowledge, they still had negative attitude and about half of them were not doing the right thing to be healthy."

"This data is crucial in determining why we are at this appalling rank and it gives insights as to what the policy makers need to keep in mind while designing the policies and campaigns," Professor Mohammadnezhad added.



*Associate Professor at FNU's
School of Public Health and Primary Care,
Dr Masoud Mohammadnezhad.*



University undertakes health checks for students

The lifestyle of students can be very stressful due to many reasons either it be the pressure of doing well in their studies, peer-pressure, being away from home or a mixture of all of these.

Hence, it is important that there are avenues available for students to access services so they are able to overcome the challenges they may be facing.

Everything we do and every emotion we feel relates to our well-being and in-turn our well-being directly affects our actions and emotions. This is an on-going cycle, thus, it is vital to achieve optimal wellness in order to subdue stress, reduce the risk of ill health and ensure positive interactions.

Therefore, promoting physical and emotional wellness within academia is a key to academic success while reducing long-term health risks such as Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) and cancer.

With this aim, the Department of Student Services at the Fiji National University (FNU) organises various health awareness and screening programs for students across major campuses. Plans to extend this services to other smaller campuses is currently being looked into.

Health and Awareness

Eating healthy and regular exercise is often linked to the notion of managing your health or staying healthy while going to the doctor is associated with being sick.

However, we fail to realise that visiting the doctor frequently for preventative care is an essential component of staying healthy.

Regular wellness visits or health check-ups can assist in detecting issues early which leads to early treatment and chances of recovery is higher than compared to late detection.

Student Life Coordinator, Praneel Sharma said “keeping in mind that students do not often get the opportunity to undergo health check-ups due to various reasons, the department organised a health screening for students at major FNU campuses (Nasinu, Koronivia, Derrick and Natabua).”

The screening consisted of Body Mass Index (BMI) measurement, blood pressure and blood check.

Sharma said this initiative received positive response from students.

“This was the first time we organised wellness visits for the students and the interest shown by them strongly suggests the need to have this check-ups conducted regularly,” said Sharma.

“Students have also suggested that we consider conducting eye-clinics as well. We have analyzed the feedback given by students and we will try to incorporate their suggestions in future wellness visits.”

This initiative provided an opportunity for students to discuss their health concerns with medical professionals.

Outdoor Sports

Being physically active is crucial to keep one’s body in top condition. Physical wellness encourages proper care of our bodies for optimum health and functioning.

Maximum levels of physical activity and maintaining proper nutrition sharpens your thinking and learning abilities while enhancing your sense of self-esteem and self-control which are significant contributors towards academic success.

Apart from the above mentioned advantages, physical wellness also aids in preventing and controlling NCDs.

Physical inactivity is one of the leading risk factor for NCDs and death worldwide. For individuals, according to World Health Organisation (WHO), the failure to enjoy adequate levels of physical activity increases the risk of cancer, heart disease, stroke and diabetes by 20-30 percent and shortens lifespan by 3-5 years.

Moreover, insufficient physical activity burdens society through the hidden and growing cost of medical care and loss of productivity.

In the pursuit of providing a holistic experience to students and to take a leadership role in the fight against NCDs, the Student Life team at the University is promoting physical wellness across FNU campuses in collaboration with the Fiji National University Students Association (FNUSA).

The FNUSA has 10 individual branches across the country which organises outdoor sports activities during the year.

FNUSA Public Relations Officer, Yashneel Lal said this initiative is fairly popular amongst students. Some of the sports students participate in include rugby, soccer, rugby league, touch rugby, volleyball, netball, basketball, hockey etc.

“It is the duty of the individual FNUSA branches to organise the sporting activities at their campuses. It is really encouraging to witness students come out in big numbers to participate in these activities. They form their own teams and play against other student teams,” said Lal.

“In the weekends, the campus associations also organise mini tournaments. We have prizes for winners and best individual players so this is another great motivation for our students to participate in such activities.”

“While students concentrate on academic success, such out-door activities assist in reliving stress, making new friends, working as a team, strengthening self-confidence and keeping them healthy,” Lal added.

The sporting activities also act as a training platform for the inter-campus games organised yearly by the Department of Student Services.

Good turn-out at health check indicate staff care about wellbeing



Ivamere Rokoduna being advised on her health status after the health screening at FNU Natabua Campus.

It was a good overall turn-out for FNU staff at the recent health check conducted in the central, western and northern divisions.

Associate Professor Dr Donald Wilson who was one of the team leaders in the week-long program said he was impressed with the turnout.

Dr Wilson said the response also indicated that staff were well-informed of the exercise, showed an interest in the status of their health and learn how to live a balanced lifestyle.

“It is very encouraging to see staff taking advantage of the medical check-up. We were really able to assist them in terms of their dietary requirements and guided them on various forms of fitness,” he said.

Dr Wilson said that staff should be aware that taking care of their health is paramount, as it will make them a better and efficient worker.

“It is very important for staff to be mindful that there is no substitute for their health. Promoting

good health among workers and creating a conducive working environment will result in reducing employee turnover,” he said.

According to Dr Wilson it was encouraging to see that staff took an interest in their dietary requirements and fitness regime.

“I am amazed that staff are aware of the benefits of having a good healthy diet however, they are unaware of the correct eating times. We have now guided them to follow the proper eating plan in a timely manner,” he said.

Department of Primary Education lecturer, Ravinesh Prasad was a happy man after the check-up stating that his doubts regarding his dietary plan was thoroughly answered.

“I am now well versed with the correct eating patterns that I need to follow. Previously I was eating the right type of food, but the timing of consuming the food was incorrect. I am glad and thankful for this check-up, as now I have been guided in the right direction,” he said.

Health and wellness initiative welcomed by Natabua staff



Fiji National University (FNU) staff based at the Natabua Campus in Lautoka eagerly lined the corridors and patiently waited to be reviewed for basic health checks conducted by the visiting medical team.

The free medical checks focused on providing staff advice on proper health diets, importance of exercise and also addressed key risk factors to health which included obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and high blood glucose.

College of Humanities and Education (CHE) lecturer, Perry Gabriel said the initiative was timely and an eye-opener for many like him as it provided a reminder of the importance of maintaining a well-balanced life style.

He said the tests flagged medical conditions which staff were unaware of as well as risk factors they had to be mindful of in future.

“I am thankful to our employer, FNU for giving us an opportunity to have free health screening. Health screenings like this provide us with a safe space to discuss any health concerns that we might have and ask questions to a qualified medical professional. This valuable time can go a long way towards avoiding health issues in the future,” said the senior academic.

After doctor’s advice, Gabriel will now follow a healthy lifestyle and will include more fruits and vegetables in his diet to boost vitality and reduce the risk of many chronic diseases.

The same sentiments were echoed by assistant lecturer Mahendra Singh, who said that health screenings provide peace of mind and overall fitness check which not only iron out issues, but provides an opportunity to reflect on lifestyles choices including work and non- work related health issues.

“I am happy that FNU is helping us staff to learn more about our health, which not only allows us to be made aware of any health issues we might be unaware of, but it also provides reassurance that FNU is concerned about the health and well-being of us,” he said.

According to Singh it was important that apart from working in a safe and positive environment, organisations need to value the health of its staff so they can be productive.

He said such initiatives act as a reminder for staff to take care of their health and avoid a life style that leads to chronic illnesses.

Wellness Screening initiative feedback



Ashrita Prakash – Finance Assistant

The advice provided by the medical team was good. I believe this check-up should be done regularly. Personally, I think I need to change my eating habits. It's important that everyone takes their health seriously. We need to stay fit, eat and sleep well.



Antonio Albert – Landscaper

I am very glad that FNU undertook this initiative. I am of that age now where regular check-ups are a must and with this free health screening I received timely advice on my health status from the professionals which has inspired me to adopt a healthy lifestyle. I would like to request the University to continue similar initiatives in future.



Miliana Savua – Assistant Lecturer Mathematics

I am glad with the service we were provided as we did not have to travel to the hospital. The advice provided by the medical team was good. I now need to make some improvements in my life. I will do more exercise and reduce fatty food intake.



Niranjana Lal – Lecturer Primary Health

This is a very good initiative and the service was delivered right at our doorstep. My check-up went very well and I've noted the advice given by the medical team. My message to everyone is to do regular exercise and maintain good health. They can do this by avoid eating junk foods.



Sarojini – Housekeeping

I am very thankful for the University for organising health screening for us staff. This shows that the University prioritises the health of its workers. It is often difficult for us to take time out to visit the doctors for such screenings. Additionally, I have saved the money that I would have been spending elsewhere for my health check-up.

Medical expert believes wellness programs should be adopted by organisations



Dr Lavinesh Raj gets his blood pressure checked during the staff wellness screening at FNU Pasifika Campus.

In the ever-changing work environment, it is paramount that organisations include wellness activities for staff as part of the human resources development plan. Emergency Physician and Fiji National University (FNU) lecturer, Dr Lavinesh Raj said global studies indicate that organisations that promote wellness activities have positive outcomes linked to productivity and staff morale. “We know that human resource is the greatest asset of an organisation and therefore it is important for organisations to ensure they look after their staff. And one of the easiest ways to achieve this is to promote health and wellness initiatives at work places. Some organisations also extend this to immediate family members of staff, which promotes harmony and at the same time improves team work,” said Dr Raj. Dr Raj, who is a Lecturer at FNU’s College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS), said the recent staff screening was a good initiative and one which should be conducted yearly. The week-long program conducted at all campuses involved blood testing, height and weight measurement, blood pressure, breast and prostate cancer checks.

“I was delighted with the way the screening process was conducted. The medical team put in a lot of work. I was also happy with the results,” said Dr Raj. “I hope this is the start to other initiatives that can be undertaken in smaller groups, for example, the formation of a running group or you could have fruit and water day once a week and make it into a fun competition that would encourage people to participate,” Dr Raj suggested. He said breast check-up was important. Sharing his personal experience, Dr Raj said when his mother was recently diagnosed with Breast Cancer it became a life changing experience for him. “The pain people go through when they have something like cancer is immense and knowing that it may not be cured is very difficult for patients and families to accept. The only way to avoid this is through regular screening and early detection,” he said. Dr Raj has urged everyone to take advantage of the screening program undertaken at hospitals so there’s early detection and treatment.

Dr Tukana leads the fight for a healthier nation

He can be best described as Fiji’s Health Warrior given the passion, dedication and commitment with which Doctor Isimeli Tukana conducts his work as a health professional and the National Adviser Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) at the Ministry of Health and Medical Services.

Dr Tukana is a realist and does not beat around the bush, especially when it comes to the topic of health and specifically NCDs, something which he holds very dear to his heart.

His passion for a healthy and prosperous Fiji runs deep in his veins and he leads by example, keeping a balanced diet, being a teetotaler and undertaking daily exercise.

“I have to do what I preach, it’s that simple and that’s my golden rule,” said Dr Tukana.

The discipline Dr Tukana commands today is from his strict upbringing as well as being born to two medical experts.

Dr Tukana hails from Vusaratu village in the district of Natewa in the province of Cakaudrove. His mother is from the village of Nabouwalu in Ono in Kadavu.

Dr Tukana’s father was a Radiographer while his mother was a Nurse and he grew up in Raiwaqa, Suva. He attained his primary education at Draiba Primary School and then attended Ratu Sukuna Memorial School and Marist Brothers High School for his secondary education.

“I was born in 1965, at the end of colonial era, attended primary and secondary school in the Independent era and by the time I reached tertiary and started work I was in the coup era,” said Dr Tukana.

Life and Career

Growing up as a child, Dr Tukana displayed great discipline and obedience. The tone was obviously set by his parents. Being a doctor was what was expected from him by his parents. “It was not a matter of want to, but simple obedience to parental advice for me,” he said.

Listening and obeying your elders, Dr Tukana believes are key ingredients to his success in life.

To all the current students he said, “Just listen and do what your teachers teach and train you to do! You should be fine.”

After high school, he embarked on a journey influenced by his father to attend the Fiji School of Medicine (FSM) and graduate as a doctor. Although the young Dr Tukana was a hostel student, he spent most of his university life at home with his parents.

“University Life was interesting. I was always at home with my parents and university life introduced me to boarding life. But even though I was boarding I still spent more time at home than in school,” he said.

“Because the course was long and the entire college roll of FSM then was about 100, we knew our peers very well – the university stories of our peers are well-known and we still refer to them even now when we have become seniors in the health industries. They were the best times and memorable ones too,” he added.

Dr Tukana graduated with a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) in 1991. His first posting was at Savusavu Hospital in 1993. He worked in Savusavu for two years before being appointed as the Sub-Divisional Medical Officer (SDMO) in Kadavu. He later served as the SDMO in Lakeba, Lau (2001-2003) and was then transferred to the Western Division where he served as the SDMO Lautoka/ Yasawa for two years, 2003 – 2005.

Later in 2005, Dr Tukana was promoted as the Chief Medical Officer - Public Health (West). After serving for three years, he was appointed as the National Adviser NCD in 2009, a post he currently holds. Dr Tukana also serves as the Head of the National Wellness Centre since 2012.

Dr Tukana attained his Master’s in Public Health (MPH) from the University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia in 2003.

Dr Tukana is married with four beautiful daughters to a Pharmacy Technologist whom he met while attending FSM.

About NCDs

As a medical professional who cared deeply for the well-being of fellow Fijians, Dr Tukana decided to focus on NCDs given the chronic impact it was having on people.



“Its simple logic that I chose to deal with the etiology of the biggest troublemaker in Fijian health – NCDs. It causes the most illnesses, disabilities and the most number of deaths below 70 years of age in Fiji,” he said.

According to Dr Tukana, NCDs was never a medical concern in Fiji prior to 1985, however due to changes in lifestyle this has grown to be a serious national concern.

“NCDs are medical consequences of lifestyle or behaviors. Therefore if the causes are lifestyle habits then the solution must include our lifestyle interventions. We in Fiji deliver two lifestyle interventions. One is to promote Wellness Fiji focusing on seven lifestyles in the following order of priority – Breathing, Thinking, Moving, Drinking, Eating, Resting and Reproducing. Second is to promote Wellness Fiji in the seven stages of life – conception, Infancy, Toddler, Child, Teenager, Adult and Senior Citizen. Wellness Fiji is Gender, Ethnic, Faith neutral and people centered,” he stated.

He emphasized that the key interventions in NCD are aimed at the protection of Fijian Children from conception to 18 years through the empowerment of women and parenting.

“The rights of the child to life and health are well enshrined in our constitution. We must ensure that all Fijians are nurtured in an environment that is conducive and promotes wellness at all means – advocacy, fiscal and regulatory measures,” added Dr Tukana.

Dr Tukana said NCDs is manageable if people adopt a healthy and well-balanced lifestyle. He said the best way is to eat local foods and be active.

“At the end of the day it’s about choices. However it is our duty to make ensure that wellness choices are easy, accessible and affordable,” he added.

Given the alarming impact of NCDs in Fiji, Dr Tukana said it’s important that people recognise this and take immediate action to ensure they do not fall victims to the tentacles is this great killer.

