

## Department builds health culture to tackle NCDs



*Head of Department Medical Imaging & Anatomy, Raymond Keshwan (right) with his staff go through their training routines.*

The College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences' (CMNHS) Department of Medical Imaging & Anatomy is using the Fiji National University's (FNU's) Wellness Program in a robust and unique manner to create a health culture and tackle Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs).

The staff change into sportswear after clocking-off from work to participate in an hour long training session led by the Head of Department, Raymond Keshwan.

Keshwan said this was an ongoing activity for their department since the implementation of the University Wellness Program.

"Our workplace affects our physical, mental, economic and social wellbeing (and) health is important as it is a defense against stress, anxiety and depression," Keshwan said.

"Proactively supporting good health increases staff productivity and makes us to enjoy life to a greater capacity."

According to the academic NCDs were accelerated in an environment of poor health and stress.

Keshwan said, they could get so engrossed with work that they could easily forget that they were only able to work because of good health.

"The body is not a machine, unfortunately that is how most of us are treating ourselves. In our zeal to achieve our goals we forget to take care of our health," Keshwan said.

"When it's time to reap the benefits of our labour, health is not usually on our side. If we take care of ourselves now, we will enjoy a much healthier and happier lifestyle in the future."

"NCDs kill more than 41 million people each year (and) it would be impossible to solve a problem of this magnitude unless every individual makes their health and wellness their own priority and responsibility."

While commending the University's efforts, the HOD said creating a culture of healthy living was not easy.

"Wellness is not only about physical health but psychological and spiritual as well. We need to initiate good pastoral care and peer support groups and probably come up with good coaching and career planning mechanisms and

maybe even job redesigning to engage in a more holistic approach towards wellness," Keshwan commented.

"In our small way at the Department level, we have an active pastoral and care support group to assist staff not only with job related issues but also with handling issues that may be not directly related to work but is having an impact in their professional life and productivity."

The one-hour physical activity session was one of the most looked forward to event of the week by the medical imaging & anatomy staff.

Assistant Lecturer in Medical Imaging Sciences, Reetika Pillay said the sessions were helpful.

"As most of our time is usually spent at our work desks (when not actively teaching students), my colleagues and I generally feel healthier with a better energy reserve at the end of a mentally tiring day," she said.

"At the end of the day when I go home, I am not lethargic but feel sufficiently revitalised to continue work at home."

Pillay said wellness began in the mind.

"When we put our minds to being more active and to move away from the sedentary work styles, we actually prolong our own individual lives. It may be at start a herculean effort but once the ball gets rolling, we find the activity not only simpler but very enjoyable also."



*Head of Department Medical Imaging & Anatomy, Raymond Keshwan (sitting first from right) with his staff.*