



CMNHS Dean, Dr William May delivers his address

No health without mental health: Dr May

Despite its importance, mental health, unfortunately, is often overlooked, not given priority or provided the necessary level of support it needs to assist those combatting this issue in silence or creating greater awareness of its existence in society.

Dean of the College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, Dr William May, speaking during the World Mental Health Day (WMHD) celebrations at the Pasifika Campus, said mental health affects everyone either in their personal or professional lives.

He said given the significance of this issue, CMNHS ensures that Mental Health is covered in its study programmes to ensure students are familiar of the signs and how to assist people who battle some degree of mental stress.

“Mental health affects our physical health and vice versa, and it is important for everyone’s wellbeing and function,” said Dr May.

“It includes our emotional, psychological and social wellbeing and affects how we think, how we feel, and how we act.”

“Mental health also helps us to determine how to handle stress and how to relate to others as individual human beings and how we make choices; therefore it is important at every stage of life,” Dr May highlighted.

He said the objective of the WMHD was to raise awareness on mental health issues around the world and to mobilise efforts to support mental health.

“This day provides an opportunity for all stakeholders on mental health issues to talk about their work and what more needs to be done to make mental health care a reality for people worldwide.”

The theme of the celebration was ‘Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention’.

The Chief Guest, mental health advocate and former Minister for Health and Medical Services, Pita Nacuva, said suicide was a tragedy.

“The impact on families, friends and communities is devastating and far-reaching, even long after loved ones have taken their lives.”

“Suicidal behaviour indicates deep unhappiness but not necessarily a mental disorder. Many people living with mental disorders are not affected by suicidal behaviour and not all people who take their own lives have a mental disorder,” Nacuva added.

According to the former speaker of the parliament, despite increased research and knowledge about suicide and its prevention, the taboo and stigma surrounding the issue persisted and often people did not seek help or were left alone.

“We can all play a part in reducing statistics in Fiji by simply being more aware, more supportive and knowing where to find more help,” Nacuva commented.

Meanwhile, Year Four Bachelor of Surgery and Bachelor of Medicine Student, Roneel Kumar, said the world was losing a generation of young people to suicide, who did not believe their voices were worth hearing and that their pain had no end.

“We are facing a crisis of epic proportions, and the cause of that crisis is our inability and or unwillingness to be open and honest about one crucial thing- mental health,” Kumar said.

“We need to bring mental health into the limelight.”

Every year, World Mental Health Day is marked on October 10.



Participants of the World Mental Health Day Celebrations