



Participants of the Symposium.

Health Minister Honourable Waqainabete encourages researchers

The Fiji Ministry for Health and Medical Services (MOHMS) is placing a strong emphasis on public health research and aims to use expertise offered by academic institutions like the Fiji National University's (FNU) College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS) in its bid to provide enhanced services to the people of Fiji.

Health Minister, Honourable Dr Ifereimi Waqainabete said, "if we see opportunities where educational institutions like FNU can conduct appropriate research for us, then we will request FNU to do so".

His comments came during the two-day 7th Pacific Islands Health Research Symposium (PIHRS) held at the Pearl Resort in Pacific Harbour, which commenced on August 29.

"It gives me pleasure to be here because medical and health research on the issues of public health interest is close to your heart and my heart."

"Seven years ago this Symposium was in infancy and coming here today into a packed room highlights that it is growing every year and research is becoming something embraced not only by the University but also those outside," Dr Waqainabete said.

The Honourable Minister also encouraged the researchers to foster close collaborations between academic institutions and health professionals to strengthen the research capacity.

"To the distinguished speakers, I express my gratitude for your contributions in making this symposium a reality."

"I am very keen to see that we work together in terms of research." The former academic informed delegates of structural changes at MOHMS including the development of a unit which solely looked after innovation and research.

Meanwhile, FNU Acting Vice-Chancellor, Professor Mohini Singh while addressing the participants said PIHRS was a premier conference in the discipline of medicine in the country and the region.

Professor Singh said FNU was working on its strategic plans for the next five years.

"Our Vice-Chancellor states that in the next strategic planning period the University will have a stronger focus on developing a vibrant research culture, which will involve strengthening the quality and quantity of research outputs, and training more doctoral candidates."

"On this note, I proudly state that CMNHS is well prepared for high-quality research, development and innovation and in 2020 the College will have its own PhD programme," Professor Singh highlighted.

The senior academic said the University was grateful for the strong research leadership in the College, ongoing support from the MOHMS, funding support from the government, UN agencies such as the World Health Organisation (WHO), and other regional, and international partners and collaborators.

Dean CMNHS, Dr William May, in his address, congratulated the presenters on completing their assignments and research which they were presenting on.

"I would like to commend you for taking the bold step of presenting in front of gifted, talented and esteemed researchers."

"A total of 67 presentations will be delivered during the Symposium with 174 participants, making PIHRS the biggest since its inauguration in 2011," Dr May said.

The Symposium concludes on August 30.



Minister for Health and Medical Services
Hon. Dr Ifereimi Waqainabete delivers his address.