



Programme Coordinator, Associate Professor of Dietetics, Dr Pragya Singh (standing middle) with other staff and students at the Kiuva Village Hall

Students spearhead efforts to stop NCDs in Kiuva

Twenty-two students from the Fiji National University's (FNU) College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS) led a community outreach project yesterday to highlight the importance of living a nutritional and balanced lifestyle in an effort to help prevent Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in communities.

The students, who are part of the Bachelor of Dietetics and Nutrition (BDN) programme, conducted a pre-test on the health assessment of the Kiuva Villagers in Tailevu.

"The intervention was planned according to the results of the survey. The students conducted a number of activities including nutritional education session, healthy food demonstrations, physical activities and setting up of home gardens," Programme Coordinator, Associate Professor of Dietetics, Dr Pragya Singh explained.

Dr Singh added that this community outreach gave students practical experience of working in communities.

"They learn to work in a different environment and this helps the students to gain cultural competencies which is an important part of their professional development."

"The students also have a chance to understand how to involve the villagers in programs which would enhance the overall health and nutritional lifestyles in the communities," she said.

Kiuva Village Development Committee member, Sevanaia Ratunaceva, said they were grateful to the students who took time out of their regular classroom schedules to facilitate them with the importance of healthy eating and lifestyle messages.

"We have many resources here in terms of the availability in food choices and going through the sessions conducted by these students, we have learnt that the choices we make in terms of what we eat can help prevent NCDs in our village," Ratunaceva said.

Meanwhile, Year 2 BDN student, Gafoor Samat, said this exercise offered him with an opportunity to connect with community members.

"Working with this community has not only enhanced our understanding of what we can expect out in the field but it has also built our confidence to lead community-based projects," Samat said.

CMNHS conducted this outreach project in close collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Medical Services.



Students also conducted a Nutritional Education session.