



OTAGO GLOBAL
HEALTH INSTITUTE
A UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO RESEARCH CENTRE

OGHI Newsletter

June 2018

Dear friends and colleagues,

Halfway through 2018 already, and here are the latest developments from our network.

OGHI 11th Annual Conference and Launch

Registration and abstract submissions for the 11th OGHI Conference are open! This year's conference week promises to be very busy in Dunedin, and so we encourage you to register early. We have a few additional events planned too: a pre-OGHI conference Pacific Day in Auckland on 26 November (hosted by The Department of Human Nutrition, University of Otago), and our official launch event and McKinlay Oration directly after the conference, from 5-7pm on Wednesday 28 November, at the Otago Business School.

See the conference website for more details:

otago.ac.nz/global-health/annual-conference

Also...

The Pacific International Health Symposium 29-30 November:

pihs.squarespace.com/

Australasian Society for Infectious Diseases (ASID NZ) 29 November – 1 December

asid.net.au/groups/nz-annual-meeting

Typhoid in the Pacific paper published

A recently published paper on typhoid in Fiji reports that poor sanitation facilities appear to be a major source of *Salmonella* Typhi, the cause of typhoid fever, in the Pacific country. The paper, published in leading tropical medicine journal PLoS Neglected Tropical Diseases, describes the research which found that transmission of typhoid in Fiji occurs mainly through consumption of contaminated surface water and unwashed produce. This study is believed to be the first to investigate the causes and modes of transmission for typhoid fever specifically in Fiji - Pacific Islands are often neglected by research due to small population sizes. Additionally, poor sanitation has rarely been identified as a risk factor for typhoid fever compared to water-related factors. Previous research on typhoid fever risk factors was undertaken mainly in Asia and showed great variation in typhoid sources and modes of transmission.



Namrata Prasad, a native Fijian and MPH graduate from the Centre for International Health who led the study design and was the first joint author of the paper, says the research project was both rewarding and a huge learning experience. "Our research provides more geographically-specific evidence needed to inform non-vaccine control measures for typhoid fever".

Typhoid fever is endemic in Fiji and incidence of the disease has increased over the past decade. The research concludes that improved sanitation facilities and protection of surface water sources and produce from contamination by human faeces are likely to contribute to typhoid control in Fiji. Otago Global Health Institute Co-Director Prof John Crump, an international typhoid fever expert who oversaw the study design, says the study is important because typhoid fever is a substantial cause of morbidity and mortality in many low and middle-income countries, and is especially prevalent in Oceania.

For more information, see

journals.plos.org/plosntds/article?id=10.1371/journal.pntd.0006571.



Student Project – Bioarchaeology in China

Dr. Melanie Miller, a postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Anatomy, spent the month of March at Shandong University in Jinan, China, starting a new collaborative bioarchaeology project.

This research will involve an international team including Associate Professor Sian Halcrow (Dept of Anatomy, University of Otago) and will examine human diet, nutrition, and health using a multi-method approach in Neolithic and Bronze Age populations from Central and North-Eastern China. One of the fascinating things Melanie discovered on her trip was the purposeful removal of particular teeth (ritual ablation) by individuals from the Dawenkou culture living in Shandong Province. While this aspect of Dawenkou culture provides insights into cultural aesthetics, it also makes examining teeth for physiological stress markers difficult as there are fewer teeth preserved to analyse! We look forward to hearing more from Melanie regarding the future findings of this research.

With best wishes,

David Fielding and John Crump
Co-Directors, Otago Global Health Institute



Prof John Crump with members of the international research team in Fiji