

2016/2017 Summer Studentship Project Application Form

Send to: Research Office, University of Otago Christchurch, PO Box 4345, Christchurch, by 5pm on **4 July 2016**

Supervisor Information (First named supervisor will be the contact):

First Supervisor's Name and Title: Prof Les Toop

Department - UOC &/or CDHB (if applicable): University of Otago

Contact Supervisors Phone: 0276622066

Lynley.cook@pegasus.org.nz

Contact Supervisors Mailing Address: Pegasus Health, 160 Bealey Ave, Christchurch 8013

Co-Supervisors Name and Title(s): Dr Lynley Cook (contact supervisor)

Research Category (Choose one category only – to be used for judging the students' presentations):

Clinical

Laboratory

Community - YES

Project Title (20 words MAXIMUM):

Understanding Canterbury's Pacific Communities' views about mental illness

Project Description:

Introduction:

Mental illness affects all communities and ethnic groups. However, it has been repeatedly observed here in Canterbury and across New Zealand that there are lower than expected rates of referral to primary mental health services than might be anticipated given the burden of mental illness for Pacific peoples.^{1,2}

There are likely to be a wide range of factors that influence low numbers being referred to these services. These include factors related to peoples understanding of mental illness, cultural values and ability to seek health services. It will also be due to characteristics of the services themselves such as the service's accessibility, approachability, availability, affordability and appropriateness.³ The scope of this project is to explore one of these factors - understandings of mental illness in Pacific communities within the Canterbury context.

There is a parallel Pegasus sponsored summer studentship on Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities.

Aim:

The aim of this project is to describe beliefs about mental illness within some of Canterbury's Pacific communities

Possible impact (in lay terms):

Health and mental health services need a good level of understanding of our diverse communities' views about their health in order to meet their health care needs. This research project will go some way to improve our understanding of how different communities understand mental illness and in turn help to improve access to health services.

Method:

The methods for this research project will be two-fold:

- Literature review of Pacific peoples concepts and views of mental illness
- Interviews with key informants that include Pacific primary mental health service providers.

Note – No members of the general public will be interviewed. We also note that due to the nature of a summer studentship, this study can only touch on different Pacific peoples and beliefs. This limitation will be acknowledged in however the research is disseminated.

