

EXPLAIN THE SCIENCE -4 In the iTaukei Language **(a focus on the laboratory sciences)** **A Panel Discussion and Q&A on the COVID-19 Vaccine in Fiji**

Date: Friday June 18 | Time: 1pm-2pm

As Fiji battles the second wave of the COVID-19 infection, the Ministry of Health and Medical Services has also strengthened its efforts in the roll-out of the Astrazeneca (AZ) vaccination programme across the country. However, discussions across social media tell us that most of us in Fiji still have many questions about the AZ vaccine, the COVID test and the science behind them, given that there are endless sources of information that our people are referring to.

In this panel discussion, the Fiji Institute of Pacific Health Research (FIPHR) at the College of Medicine, Nursing & Health Sciences (CMNHS) brings together experts who will share their thoughts on these most-asked questions about COVID-19 and the AZ vaccine.



Ms Taina Naivalu

Panelist

Taina is a Lecturer in Microbiology and Immunology at the College of Medicine, Nursing and Medical Sciences where she is the Head of Department of Pathology and Medical Science. After attaining her Bachelor in Medical Laboratory Science from the Fiji School of Medicine, she pursued a Master of Science in Medicine (Infection & Immunity) at the University of Sydney. She also has a Master of Science Biology (thesis) from the University of the South Pacific where her research focus was on Arboviruses. Last month, with 2 other collaborators won an OGHF funding to pursue a research in Fiji on surveillance of SARS-CoV-2 in wastewater. She has 20 years of experience working in Medical Laboratories in Fiji including the Fiji CDC.



**Mr Sakiusa
Baleivanualala**

Panelist

Sakiusa is a staff at the College of Medicine, Nursing and Medical Sciences. He is currently a Doctorate of Microbiology candidate at the University of Otago researching on the transmission of antibiotic resistant bacteria in Fiji. He attained his Master of Infectious Diseases at the University of Western Australia and Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Science at the Fiji School of Medicine/University of South Pacific. He is a current member of New Zealand Microbiological Society and Fiji Institute of Medical Laboratory Scientists. He spent 19 years working in the Clinical Microbiology Laboratories at the three Fiji major hospitals and Public Health Laboratory at the Fiji CDC. He was also involved in the meningococcal C and typhoid outbreak response in Fiji.



Mr Adriu Sepeti

Panelist

Adriu is currently lecturing in Transfusion Medicine at the College of Medicine, Nursing and Medical Sciences. He attained his Bachelor in Medical Laboratory Science from the Fiji School of Medicine, and is currently pursuing his Masters of Management of Transfusion Medicine from the University of Groningen, Netherlands. His research interest is on the Impact of vaccination on the safety of blood supply. Currently he is the president of the Fiji Institute of Medical Laboratory Scientist, and Interim Chairman of the Fiji Allied Health Management Board.



Mr Josese Mailulu

Panelist

Josese is a founder and currently the executive chairman of the Pacific Laboratory Specialists Pte. Ltd. based in Suva, Fiji. He attained his Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Science at the Fiji School of Medicine/ University of the South Pacific and has more than 20 years of experience working in medical laboratories in Fiji and other Pacific Island countries. Former Director for Pacific Specialist Hospital. He is a current member of the Fiji Institute of Medical laboratory Scientists and also a member of the Fiji Cancer Coalition task force.



Dr Donald Wilson

Moderator

Dr Wilson is an epidemiologist and a public health physician by background. He is currently the Associate Dean Research and Director of the Fiji Institute of Pacific Health Research (FIPHR) for the College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS) at FNU.

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