
ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS
MEDIA RELEASE



Measuring the long-term success of cardiac surgery in Fiji

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The provision of cardiac surgery in Fiji by visiting health professionals is safe and viable and has acceptable long-term results, delegates at the 82nd Annual Scientific Congress (ASC) of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons have been told.

Dr Neil Curran, a general surgical registrar at Middlemore Hospital and Dr Sonal Nagra, a general surgical registrar at Dunedin Hospital, presented information on the work of a cardiothoracic surgery team, funded by the charitable trust Friends of Fiji Heart Foundation. This team has been conducting surgical missions to Fiji since 2005.

“An audit of the annual work in Lautoka Hospital between 2007-11 was presented at the cardiothoracic section of last year’s ASC in Kuala Lumpur,” Dr Curran said. “Interest was expressed in the long-term outcomes of these surgical patients. Dr Nagra and I sought to answer this important question and discuss the results at this year’s ASC.

“To do this we correlated our own list of operative patients from 2007-12, with the records of the Fiji Department of Health. Then, with the help of the local doctors at Fijian regional hospitals, we attempted to clarify the outcome of all our surgical patients.”

Dr Curran and Dr Nagra reported that the team had performed 114 major cardiac operations at Lautoka hospital over the 6 years. This included 95 rheumatic valvular operations and 14 Atrial Septal Defect repairs. In addition, five coronary artery bypass operations were performed in 2012. It is believed that these are the first such operations to be performed in the Pacific Islands.

“To our knowledge, seven of the 114 patients have died,” Dr Nagra said. “Two of these were in the perioperative period and five were later deaths. The causes of death were discussed as part of the presentation. It has been previously demonstrated that provision of major cardiac surgery by visiting teams of health professionals is safe and viable. We conclude, given the newer, longitudinal data presented here, that this work also has acceptable long-term results.

“The visiting team aims to provide a service of the highest standards, and sees ongoing follow-up of our patients as an important part of this work. We will continue to audit our outcomes in order to ensure ongoing improvement in patient care and efficiency.”

Approximately 1200 surgeons from New Zealand, Australia and around the world are attending the ASC, which runs from 6 to 10 May and is being held at Auckland’s Skycity/Crowne Plaza Convention Centre.

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