





## MEETING ABSTRACTS

### Adapting In-Person National Emergency Medical Teams (EMT) Introductory Training to a Virtual, Storytelling (Talanoa) Format for Pacific Island Countries and Areas (PICs)

Anthony T. Cook MCC<sup>1</sup> , Durgavasini Devanath MB BCh BAO, LRCP & SI<sup>1</sup>, Erin E. Noste MD<sup>1,2</sup> , Pierre-Yves Beauchemin MA<sup>1</sup>, Drew R. Chandler<sup>1</sup> , Sean T. Casey MPhil<sup>3,4</sup> 

1. World Health Organization, Western Pacific Regional Office, Division of Pacific Technical Support, Suva, Fiji
2. Department of Emergency Medicine, University of California San Diego, San Diego, California, United States
3. World Health Organization, Western Pacific Regional Office, Manila, Philippines
4. University of New South Wales, Sydney, NSW, Australia

**Background/Introduction:** Many Pacific governments have committed to establishing deployable, self-sufficient national EMTs following recent tropical cyclones, measles outbreaks, and the COVID-19 pandemic. However, for much of the COVID-19 pandemic, PICs have closed international borders limiting in-person team member training.

**Objectives:** To develop a remote, interactive EMT training series to engage current and prospective EMT team members in the PICs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Method/Description:** From July through September 2021, WHO hosted a weekly webinar series to introduce the concepts

of the EMT Initiative to current and prospective EMT team members in the PICs. The sessions utilized Pacific deployment experience using faculty from EMTs in Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu.

**Results/Outcomes:** Attendees from over 23 countries from across the Pacific and other areas of the world participated in the 11 sessions, with a total of over 300 individual participants. The average number of participants per sessions was 85. Feedback was sought after every session. The most significant adaptation of the sessions from the feedback was incorporating the Pacific tradition of talanoa, or storytelling, into the sessions.

**Conclusion:** Adapting the session plans to incorporate the talanoa style of communication in the Pacific created an environment of learning from colleagues throughout the Pacific and increased participant engagement in the virtual setting. The webinar series provided knowledge of EMT basics and increased engagement and excitement in the establishment and continued growth of EMTs in the Pacific.

### References (optional)

1. United Nations. Classification and minimum standards for Emergency Medical Teams. Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization; 2021. [apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/341857](https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/341857).

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