|  |
| --- |
| **Promoting health through Health Promoting Schools Project in Fiji** |
| **Background/Objectives**  While Health Promoting Schools (HPS) is a globally recommended settings-based approach to promoting child health, evidence of impact, especially in low and middle income settings is lacking. HPS takes a whole school approach to improving child health. Critical components include policy, services, curriculum and involvement of parents and students. Building on an existing HPS programme in Fiji, a standardized model of HPS delivery, and a strong monitoring system was developed. The project is a partnership between Ministries of Health and Education, supported by the WHO and KOICA.  **Methods**  The sample consisted of 204 schools (161 primary, 43 secondary) in Fiji, a low-middle-income country with a diverse and geographically spread population. The study began on September, 2016 and will conclude in October 2019. Assessments completed were of the school and children. A school-based assessment tool was used, and evidence, was verified by an external assessor. Quantitative data on student knowledge, attitude and behaviour was collected using a self-completed-e-questionnaire, while weight, height, haemoglobin and prevalence of Soil Transmitted Helminth were also assessed in a sample of students. Both school- and child-based assessments were analysed to identify dominant themes and needs for action. Each school then developed targeted intervention plans which will be monitored. Follow-up measures will be used to assess impact.  **Results**  All schools have completed school-based assessments. Response rates for e-survey were between 60-100%, while those for the STH assessment were around 50%. Themes extracted from school data were: (a) not using school health policy for selling foods in school canteens, (b) Government funding was not used for improving student toilet and hand washing points, (c) lesson plans lacked diversity, and (d) lack of equipment for reduced student participation in Physical Education and gardening contributed. Student data showed large variations between schools, for weight status, anaemia and STH prevalence.  **Discussion**  While this study is only partly completed, it has identified extensive areas of need to improve child health, across infrastructure, teacher skills and awareness raising.  **Keywords-** Non-Communicable Diseases, Health Promoting Schools, Low and Middle Income Countries (LMIC), School Community |