

Dr Ofa Dewes has been awarded a \$450,000 'Ageing Well in Māori and Pacific Peoples National Science Challenge' (NSC) grant to explore the needs of Pacific older adults at the end of life. Among the disadvantaged dying, they experience high levels of unmet needs and poor access to palliative care services. Yet little is known about their preferences for care at the end of life or those of their aiga (family) carers.

Her two-year project, Tāpinga 'a Maama*: Pacific Life and Death in Advanced Age, will address concerns raised by Pacific communities about the differences between the care and support preferred by Pacific older adults and their aiga at the end of life, and that provided by palliative care services. "Our goal is to present ethnic-specific and culturally-centred information that highlights the experiences and expectations of aiga carers and families," Ofa said.

Besides generating new knowledge, another goal is to identify approaches to palliative care services that healthcare providers can use "to address inequities in health and wellness for Pacific people," Ofa said. Other possible outcomes could centre on devising culturally-appropriate methods for discussing such critical issues as Advance Care Planning or on building health professionals' cultural competency regarding Pacific protocols around death and dying. "Another goal is to identify approaches to palliative care services that healthcare providers can use 'to address inequities in health and wellness for Pacific people' . . ."

An integral part of the project is reporting back to the Pacific community. Ofa will make use of traditional academic pathways such as conferences and academic journals but also draw upon community-centred approaches. "We'll be holding fonos in Pacific communities to let people know what we've found – what they've told us – that needs to be improved."

In addition, she'll be seeking to use the research to stimulate and strengthen debate both at home and internationally about ageing well. "We need to remember that ageing well also must include dying well."

Another significant aspect of her dissemination strategy will be to use 'digital storytelling' to capture short videos in which aiga carers speak for themselves about their experiences providing care. Creating the digital stories will mark the third collaboration between the School of Nursing and Faculty of Arts colleagues Associate Professor Shuchi Kothari and Dr Sarina Pearson who have produced the previous projects, 'Māori digital stories' and the **Im** Farewell: Haere Atu Ra.

Two of Ofa's associate investigators, Malia Hamani and Dr Mervina Cash-Kaeo, lead health and social service agencies that include programmes for older adults in Pacific communities. Malia is General Manager of Treasuring Older Adults (TOA) in Auckland and Mervina is President/Chief Executive Officer of Alu Like, Inc. in Honolulu.

The other research team members (from the School of Nursing) include Professor Merryn Gott, Dr Tess Moeke-Maxwell, and Dr Lisa Williams and Dr Janine Wiles from the School of Population Health. "There is such a need for this research," Merryn said. "Good palliative care provision can vastly improve the quality of life of older people."

The 'Ageing Well in Māori and Pacific Peoples National Science Challenge' was set up in recognition of the special challenges and opportunities faced by Māori and Pacific peoples to age well. The 2016 contestable funding round specifically focused on research that investigated aspects of ageing relevant for them.

* *Tāpinga 'a Maama* means from time to eternity.

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