



VITAL ANAESTHESIA SIMULATION TRAINING



VAST Wellbeing
Savusavu, Fiji
Pacific Society of Anaesthetists (PSA) Conference

September 27, 2023

Dr Anna West, Dr Eunice Onisimo

Executive summary

Situation

VAST Wellbeing was successfully delivered for the first time in the Pacific to a large group of participants (44) at the Pacific Society of Anaesthetists Conference at Savusavu in September, 2023.

Background

The VAST Course and VAST Lite have been taught multiple times in Fiji since VAST's inception:

- September 2023: VAST Course, Suva
- June 2023: VAST Course, Suva
- September 2022: VAST Facilitator Course and VAST Lite, Suva
- October 2019: VAST Course and VAST Facilitator Course, Suva

Previous PSA Conferences in 2019 and post COVID 2022 included workshops on wellbeing which were well received, and there had been a request from participants to continue to address these issues and challenges in the Pacific. The PSA Conference represented a unique opportunity to deliver the course to a large number of participants from a range of Pacific Countries in the context of a weeklong conference. VAST Wellbeing had not previously been taught by any of the facilitators who delivered it at the PSA, however all had previously taught on VAST and completed VAST Facilitator Training. The VAST Wellbeing Facilitator Resources were completely adequate to enable first time facilitation by the entire faculty without issue.

Assessment

VAST Wellbeing was an excellent course to deliver to a large group of participants in the context of a regional conference. The course was enthusiastically received and teaching to a large group by a relatively small group of facilitators (5) was very achievable, and felt to even have advantages compared to having a smaller group of participants.

Recommendations

This was the largest participant group VAST Wellbeing has delivered to thus far. The format worked well and still enabled in-depth discussions and sharing of perspectives. Depending on the group participant dynamics and backgrounds, delivering VAST Wellbeing to a large group is an excellent means to reach a large audience and stimulate discussion.

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Acknowledgements

We thank the following organisations for supporting participant attendance at the PSA Conference, and for covering associated costs to deliver VAST Wellbeing:

- Pacific Society of Anaesthetists
- Fiji National University (FNU)
- WFSA
- NZ Society of Anesthetists (NZSA)
- Australian Society of Anaesthetists (ASA)
- Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA)

Attendees

Facilitators

Dr Eunice Onisimo, Consultant Anaesthetist, Lautoka Hospital, Fiji, Course Director
Dr Chris Bowden, Consultant Anaesthetist, Gold Course University Hospital, Australia
Dr Megan Walmsley, Consultant Anaesthetist, Fiji National University/ CWM Hospital, Fiji
Dr Alice Goldsmith, Consultant Anaesthetist, Westmead Hospital, Australia
Dr Anna West, Consultant Anaesthetist, Bunbury Regional Hospital, Australia

Attendees

NAME	COUNTRY	ROLE
Selesia Fifita	Tonga	Consultant Anaesthetist
Maria Piedade	East Timor	Anaesthetic Registrar
Amanaki Puniani	Tonga	Anaesthetic Registrar
Fa'amuum ua Arasi	Samoa	Consultant Anaesthetist
Gabriel Pauu	Cook Islands	Anaesthetic Registrar
Kenton Biribo	Fiji	Consultant Anaesthetist
Saleimoa Sami	New Zealand	Consultant Anaesthetist
Salote Rerealoa	Cook Islands	Anaesthesia Technician
Corleone Vaai	Samoa	Anaesthetic Registrar
Teraiman Kabong	Kiribati	Anaesthetic Registrar
Kunal Singh	Fiji	Anaesthetic Registrar
Toni Anitelea	New Zealand	Anaesthetic Registrar
Sealiitu Esjae Sesega	Samoa	Anaesthetic Registrar
Patric Haisoma	Papua New Guinea	Consultant Anaesthetist
Rajneel Kumar	Fiji	Anaesthetic Registrar
James Dalby-Ball	New Zealand	Consultant Anaesthetist
Mario Soares	East Timor	Anaesthetic Registrar
Hibert Tovrika	Papua New Guinea	Consultant Anaesthetist
Mary Tuke	Papua New Guinea	Consultant Anaesthetist
Arishma Prasad	Fiji	Anaesthetic Registrar
Priyanka Shristy	Fiji	Anaesthetic Registrar
Kate Campbell	New Zealand	Consultant Anaesthetist
Siale Hausia	Tonga	Consultant Anaesthetist
Adilagi Vedewaqa	Fiji	Anaesthetic Registrar

Kata Mocelekaleka	Fiji	Anaesthetic Registrar
Robinson Toukone	Vanuatu	Consultant Anaesthetist
Sherene Prasad	Fiji	Consultant Anaesthetist
Cecilia Vaai-Bartley	Samoa	Anaesthetic Registrar
Nikita Kumar	Fiji	Anaesthetic Registrar
Tetikannari Toom	Kiribati	Anaesthetic Registrar
Enele Tuima	Fiji	Consultant Anaesthetist
Daniel Ramsey	New Zealand	Consultant Anaesthetist
Lisepa Mila	Fiji	Consultant Anaesthetist
Eddie Sui	Solomon Islands	Anaesthetic Registrar
Rosemary Andrews	Papua New Guinea	Consultant Anaesthetist
Lamour Hansell	SPC	Consultant Anaesthetist
Jona Sokiveta	Niue	Consultant Anaesthetist
Watisoni Saloto	Fiji	Anaesthetic Registrar
Terence Fong	Fiji	Anaesthetic Registrar
Raymond Vuniwa	Fiji	Anaesthetic Consultant
Mere Vugawai	Fiji	Anaesthetic Consultant
Lisa Akelisi	Papua New Guinea	Anaesthetic Consultant
Sweta Mudliar	Fiji	Anaesthetic Registrar
Atuna Merako	Kiribati	Anaesthetic Consultant

Venue and equipment

The course was held at Wasawasa Resort, Savusavu Fiji. The conference venue was one large room, which was set up for the PSA conference with AV equipment and tables for groups of up to 8 delegates per table. There was one breakout room available, but it was not felt that this was necessary, and was not used to deliver the course. Participants were encouraged to download the Course Handbook prior to the day, and eight copies were printed (one for each table). Faculty used their own laptops, and some presentations were modified to add local content - eg background of Burnout in the Pacific from a recent survey, and addition of slides on local resources available for support.

Session, challenges and lessons learnt

For all the facilitators, we felt in this context the content worked better with a big group, and that it would have been too intense in a group of 8-10 participants. This was interesting, as in the early discussions about delivering the course to such a large group there were very valid concerns that a large group could hinder interaction, or limit the ability to get to 'meaty' parts of discussions. Throughout the day and on reflection after the course, we felt the converse to be true. This was probably at least in part due to the participants all knowing each other, and facilitators knowing the group, but it was interesting that a large group could still get to the heart of topics and had time to share with such a large group. And perhaps that even such 'serious' topics could be more easily shared because the group was bigger.

Holding VAST Courses during a conference can present unique opportunities as well as challenges. At a previous PSA (2022), VAST Lite was conducted over consecutive days at the end of the program on each day. It was felt that running the course in its entirety during a single day

(compared to holding individual sessions over multiple days) was hugely advantageous to build momentum and to allow for full focus on the content. The PSA Conference is run in a single stream, hence it was enabling that the programming allowed for the entire delegate group to attend. We are not sure how this would have looked if there were 'competing' sessions running at the same time as VAST Wellbeing - either for the alternate stream, or for VAST WB.

We decided to let participants naturally divide themselves into tables, which were then used for small group discussions. Facilitators felt that this encouraged the most open and comfortable setting for participants to discuss what can be sensitive issues. Most groups were country-based, and it worked really well during exercises then having reflections shared amongst the group at the end of each session. There had been consideration to breaking into smaller groups to have parallel streams throughout the day, then joining back to the large group for reflections at the end of the day. However due to venue set up, facilitator numbers, and group dynamics, we decided to have discussions throughout the day, and this worked remarkably well.

It was felt that finishing the day on discussions surrounding organisational change at a high level ended the day on a bit of a relative downer- whilst discussion of workforce and salary challenges were certainly important, they did feel like we ended on topics which will be more challenging to modify. We modified the presentations slightly to add context where possible and this felt like it enabled the content to be even more relevant to participants.

Evaluations

The course was well received, with ongoing comments during the remainder of the conference around discussion topics and particularly the impact and benefit of the mindfulness activities.

30 participants provided written evaluations. Of these, 27 strongly agreed that the training was engaging and relevant. All participants either agreed or strongly agreed that they would use the skills learned that day.

Qualitative feedback was as follows.

Participants particularly enjoyed:

- Practical mindfulness techniques, particularly including breathing exercises
- Learning about burnout signs, and discussion of this topic

Of particular note, many participants commented that they enjoyed the feedback from all participants and hearing from colleagues working across the region. They felt it was helpful to discuss challenges and solutions from others working in different countries, but in similar contexts.

Participants suggested the following areas for improvement:

- More scenarios to guide discussion
- More exercises or techniques
- Having a professional psychologist talk
- At times the sessions felt a bit long and content felt repetitive

Facilitator Feedback

It was felt that the course was of excellent quality, and that the facilitator resources were very enabling given that none of us had run the course before. It did not feel like a barrier to all be teaching the course for the first time together. We ran a regular VAST Course the preceding week for a small number of participants (who were also attending PSA). We omitted the final scenarios of day 2 to prevent overlap, which had the benefit of making the VAST Course itself a little shorter, and fuller attention to be given to burnout.

Recommendations

1. Adapting the program to local setup encourages engagement and allows for delivery to large groups in an effective way. For us, it worked well to integrate some of the sessions. For example during Session 5, Healthy Habits, we paused and undertook the exercises from Session 6, Establishing Healthy Habits. This streamlined the day and we felt made the presentations and exercises sit well together.
2. Where appropriate, adding some local content/resources allows for the course to be even more relevant to participants. We were fortunate in Fiji that there has been a lot of activity in this area in recent years, so there were survey results available
3. Delivering VAST Wellbeing to a larger group should be considered very feasible, and in some respects even advantageous compared to a smaller group of participants
4. Running VAST Wellbeing during a conference is a great way to access a large number of participants - however it was advantageous to still run the course in its entirety in a single day, rather than splitting sessions over multiple days after other conference content
5. Some minor adjustments to teaching resources are suggested:
 - a. Photo disclosure to be added to introduction presentation (same as VAST Course)
 - b. To enable integration of exercises during presentations, consider highlighting/using bold in presenter notes in powerpoint, and reference participant handbook page number in presenter notes
 - c. We did the body scan exercise pre morning tea, and the mindful walking after lunch, which both felt well timed in the cadence of the day
 - d. We modified the square breathing to a triangle, as holding the exhale did not feel comfortable
 - e. For our group, we felt more comfortable reading the scripts for mindfulness exercises rather than using recordings. It was also suggested that, if possible, role-playing or pre-recording the Dr Tim scenario with local presenters/participants would be a good option. Including the scenario script in the facilitator manual would enable this

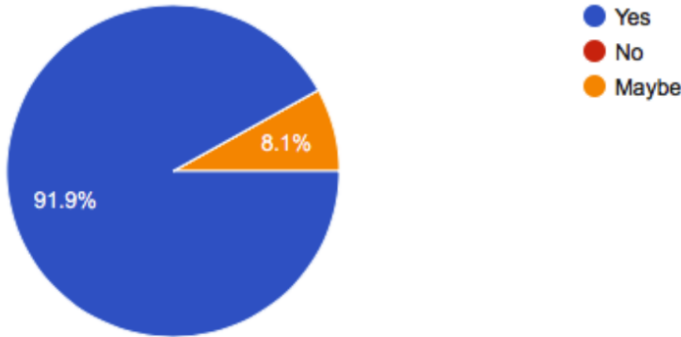
Course photos



PSA 2022

I have felt burned out at some point in my career

Responses



Addition of Slide to Burnout Presentation for local context and background