mostly related to sexual intercourse. Quarantine will not protect society because only some of the infected will be quarantined, and they represent no general public threat anyway. Protection is best achieved by personal measures: being responsible and careful about personal sexual activity, and using condoms whenever risk exists.

Mandatory testing of the general public would only be justified if subsequent quarantine were possible and effective, or if, by informing large numbers of people of their HIV status, it resulted in measurable changes in behavior. It is much more likely that the family or community reaction, and especially the threat of quarantine, would sabotage efforts at mandatory testing; or else its enforcement would be so cumbersome and expensive as to make the result not nearly worth the effort. On the other hand, voluntary testing, and even "routine" testing in certain populations such as persons with other sexually transmitted diseases, may be very helpful in educational efforts.

Those looking for legislative or regulatory answers to community, national, or regional AIDS control in the Pacific will not find them in Dr. Lewis' monograph. Such answers do not exist. AIDS and Tourism: Implications for Pacific Island States provides a useful and important analysis of issues of pressing concern in many Pacific island nations. And it reconfirms that, at least until a vaccine or an effective treatment is found, our best defense against AIDS remains a personal one. It's a risky world. Attempts to make our environment (or our island) safe from AIDS are much less effective and enormously more complicated than keeping ourselves safe.

The final message is: educate and protect yourself, and teach others to do the same.

Reviewed by: Michael J. O'Leary, M.D., M.P.H. Epidemiologist, Federated States of Micronesia. □

Aspects of Old Age in Fiji

by Nii-K Plange
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This 133 page monograph went into print in 1987, thereby becoming the first major publication on this particular topic for this particular part of the world. For this reason alone, it ought to be reviewed. It is more than likely however that certain readers, including perhaps the author and publisher, may hold the view that this reviewer lacks the proper qualifications to be an expert in this particular field and hence, the credibility for this review exercise.

I can only respond to that by pointing out that I am a Fijian who knows more than a little about Fiji's social and economic environments. My work involvement is also in teaching basic medical sciences (including sociology), community health, and general practice, all of which are concerned with the welfare of the elderly. And, like everyone else around me, I am heading inevitably towards old age and, mortality willing, to becoming an elderly person within the kind of social environment that the book deals with.

This publication was spawned (a word frequently encountered in the book) out of a W.H.O. sponsored four country study intended to provide data on aging. For Fiji, its specific aims were ..... "to increase awareness among researchers and policy makers of the issues associated with an aging population, to generate provisional and indicative quantifiable data on which to base objectives for more intensive investigation, and to also provide data from which can be derived areas of policy targets and programmes to meet the needs of the elderly".....quoting directly from the book. The W.H.O. protocol for the four country study was designed to provide data on the status of the elderly in relation to health, economic resources, lifestyles, mental status, disabilities and utilization of health services, as well as in other activities of daily living such as housing, transport and social resources, together with family support.

"The study acknowledges that the sociocultural environment in Fiji conforms with those of other developing communities in which it is unequivocally accepted that the younger generation is duty bound to care for its elderly parents (and sometimes grandparents), even in the changing world and its new forms of economic organization."

The guiding philosophy was the view that, - to quote directly from the book again...."information on the health and social characteristics of the aging population, their attitudes and utilization of current services, and certain information to be obtained from their immediate family (where appropriate), are relevant to a formulation of their needs

and therefore useful in the process of planning of programmes and formulation of policies on aging"....

The study acknowledges that the sociocultural environment in Fiji conforms with those of other developing communities in which it is unequivocally accepted that the younger generation is duty bound to care for is elderly parents (and sometimes grandparents), even in the changing world and its new forms of economic organization. That situation exists in Fiji, just as it does in virtually all Pacific cultures and communities. Which means, in effect, that the existing situation negates the guiding philosophy under which the study was conducted.

The usefulness of the gathered data for the purpose it was meant to serve, therefore, becomes questionable. The contention that such data will be useful for the planning and provision of services which lengthen life expectancy and improve the welfare of the elderly is also a moot point, although probably valid. However, whether this would be more desirable and therefore of a greater health priority than studies undertaken at the other end of the life span, aimed at reducing infant mortality for example, is an issue with which most social scientists will disagree. The relationship between socioeconomic status and the care of the elderly is a time tested and well established concept.

In most developing communities, caring for the elderly is of paramount importance to the maintained existence of the extended family. This is a concept that should be encouraged and perhaps the most beneficial outcome of the study is that it does support this precept in both its findings as well as in text and presentation. This however, is hardly surprising and only helps to reemphasize in this reviewer's mind why other information that can be more gainfully deployed by government, etc. to improve the care of the elderly by their extended families, were not part of the study protocol.

The book is frustrating in its overall impact on this reader. It precipitated an ambivalence of perception in my mind and I did not know whether I should read it as a scientist or as a lay person. In the end, however, it seemed to me that I would have been unhappy either way because different sections of the book appear to be written specifically for one or the other category of readers.

Although not a publisher or an author, I would have thought that published works should normally be aimed and targeted at specific categories of readers. In the case of this book, readers with perusal interests which are primarily scientific and therefore analytical, will be unhappy with the way in which the results were presented. The mass of tabulated data follows virtually the same boring format with no statistical tests of significance given - not to mention the numerous mathematical errors scattered throughout many of the tables. Why much of this information was not graphically presented is difficult to understand.

Equally difficult to comprehend is the section on "profiles". Why those particular five individuals were selected out of the total of 769 people (or thereabouts) interviewed, is not stated. Logic defies all attempts to guess the reasons behind the selection of these particular individuals for this book. Are there five broad groups under which all interviewees may be categorized?

"More serious in my view however, was the oversight in not extending the enquiry to include key people within the extended family circle who are most closely and/or actively involved with the care of the elderly."

What is the carry home message the reader is supposed to extract from this section? And how does that lead on to the next section entitled "implications of the study"? Similarly, it was just as confusing to try and comprehend the rationale for inclusion of the final chapter on "theoretical issues and research orientation emerging from the study; modernization and the extended family". That historical dissertation may be relevant and useful as a textbook for University students involved with the theoretical exposition of sociology, but appears totally out of context with the presented work. The lay reader must surely find it confusing, inappropriate and boring.

The study *per se* generates a lot of unanswered questions in this reviewer's mind. It was undoubtedly an undertaking of major proportions involving much planning and resources. It is most certainly not an inexpensive exercise in terms of fiscal expenditure.

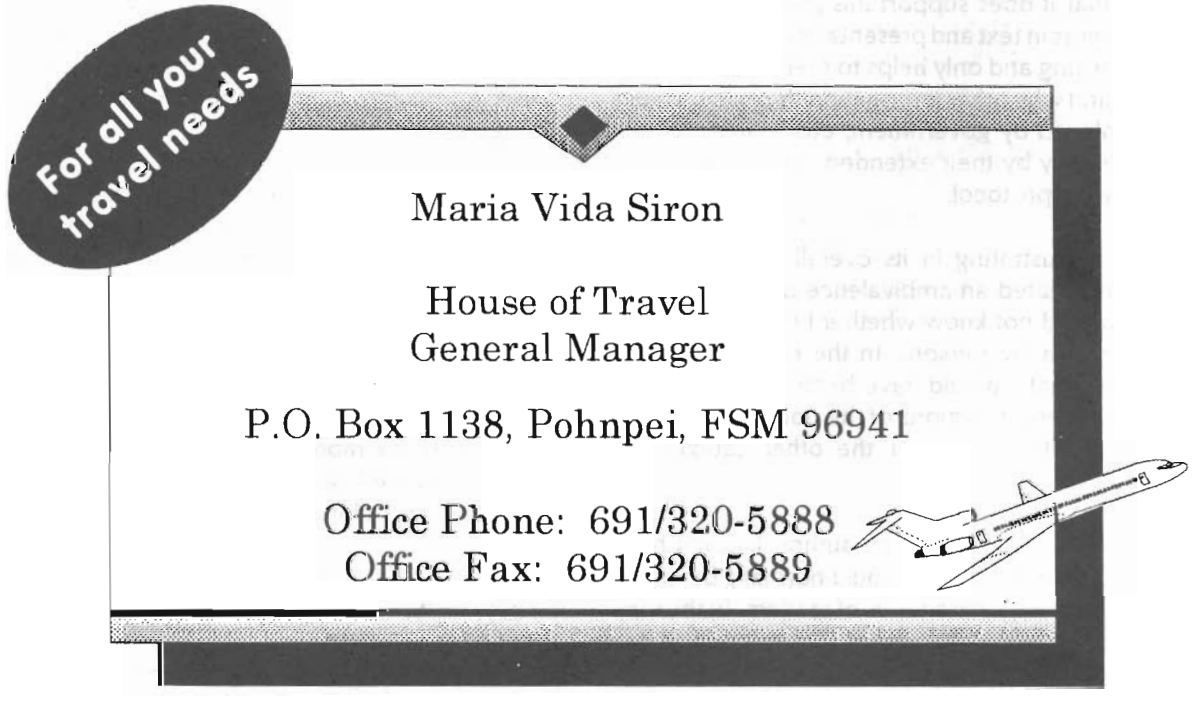
To this end, I again voice my previously stated concern about the need for it at this time, versus other sociological studies which are more likely to have a greater beneficial impact on the welfare and social fabric of the multi-ethnic cultures of Fiji's plural society. That aside, however, it would seem to me that this particular investigative exercise on old age and aging in Fiji leaves much to be desired in terms of goal(s), planning and the results obtained. The interviewed sample seemed inadequately small at only 2.1% of the eligible population.

More serious in my view however, was the oversight in not extending the enquiry to include key people within the extended family circle who are most closely and/or actively involved with the care of the elderly. Having gone through the trouble of identifying those elderly people who were chosen and interviewed in the study, I would have thought that it would have been just as easy, and certainly no more demanding work-wise, to also identify at least one member of each interviewee's extended family who is closely involved in the care of that particular elderly person, and try to obtain some insight into how they feel about the care of their elderly relatives.

This study refers frequently to the Fiji government's visible policy of encouraging the extended family to retain the primary responsibility for the care of their elderly members. Would it not be just as important, if not more so, to find out what certain key members of the extended families involved in this study would regard as appropriate assistance from government in order to help them care for their elderly relatives? As it is, the study report gave no indication of the response rate to the investigation, i.e. of the numbers who refused to be interviewed, or who were interviewed only with reluctance. That, at least, would provide some insight into how the elderly feel about the government's role or lack of it in their overall care.

Despite whatever shortcomings there may be in the study itself or the presentation format adopted in this publication, the most positive outcome of the undertaking is the reaffirmation of the extended family as the caretaker for Fiji's elderly society.

This reviewer's brief encounter with Micronesian communities of the northern Pacific basin has helped to alert my mind again to the risks which the extended families of developing communities of the South Pacific could be threatened with because of well intentioned but totally inappropriate impositions by well meaning but uninformed do-gooders of first world societies.

Having seen how a U.S. Federal "Old Age" program is implemented, its current mode of operation and some of the activities which it promotes, I can only pray that such programs remain confined to communities of the U.S. Pacific basin.

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