



A day in the life of a health extension officer

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Namatanai Rural Hospital sees 40,000+ patients a year, yet has only recently been connected to power and running water. This presentation will explore the “tight-rope” approach needed to deliver quality health care in such a restricted context. It will begin by setting the context for health care delivery in PNG, particularly looking at the political and budgetary fragmentation since Independence. It will then use the lens of a “Day in the life of a HEO” to explore issues such as resource allocation, staff-burnout and maintenance of minimum clinical standards. Particular attention will be paid to the role HEOs play in delivering health services in the absence of medical officers. The presentation will finish by arguing that it will only be possible to deliver quality health services at the hospital if non-government or private service providers become involved.