



Sovereignty in health—towards a new paradigm in the Pacific

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The presentation is about sovereignty in health, not health sovereignty. Sovereignty in health alludes to the ability of people to live in a society where health—ultimately wellness—is attainable through informed health choices. Wellness as a public good must be pursued relentlessly by governments, communities, clans, families and individuals because traditional cultures of the Pacific have limited options and poor health outcomes in 'health' systems dominated by disease.

This presentation will review several issues: health versus disease; wellness as a public good; an ecological model for the pursuit of wellness; and the Palau Health Foundation as an example of a possible pacific solution to achieving sovereignty in health. The goal is to present a platform for debate about disease versus health focused strategic approaches in trying to achieve wellness in the Pacific. Health-focused approaches and systems must be relentlessly pursued by the Pacific Island countries, if they are to address their disease burden, vulnerabilities, resiliencies and survivability. Even more so, the pursuit of wellness must be at the epicenter of developments in small and isolated island countries of the Pacific—especially in a world dominated by hugeness, borderless commerce and globalisation.