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OF TROPICAL HEALTH & MEDICINE



JAMES COOK
UNIVERSITY
AUSTRALIA

Cairns
Singapore
Townsville

Seminar Series

Sea level rise and mental health in people living on low-lying and man-made islands of East Malaita, Solomon Islands

Mr James Asugeni

Mental Health Instructor – Atoifi Hospital, Malaita Province

Date: Wednesday 20 May 2015

Time: 1:00pm to 2:00pm

Venue: JCU Cairns, A3.2 Crowther Theatre

video linked to

Venue: JCU Townsville, Padua Theatre Room 103



People living on low-lying and man-made islands in the Pacific are acutely aware of the effects of sea-level rise. The inundation of villages during high-tide season is changing the way individuals, families and communities go about their daily life. This change affects the way people think and act – both individually and collectively.

This presentation will describe and report results from a recent study that documents the experiences of people living in low-lying villages and islands and the mental health issues associated with sea-level rise in these settings. It will then outline practical village-led efforts to build a bridge across inundated areas to ensure children can go to school, women can get to local markets and families can access health services during the high-tide season.

James is a nurse by profession with postgraduate degrees in mental health and public health from University of Papua New Guinea. He is Mental Health Instructor for Ministry of Health and Medical Services based at Atoifi Hospital on the remote east coast of the island of Malaita. James is the only qualified mental health professional serving a population of almost 30,000 people from across 5 different language groups. James is interested in conducting research and providing mental health services that balance western medicine with local cultural practices and beliefs.