Building resilience and ameliorating risk in Pacific Island children and young people in South Western Sydney

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Pacific Islander (PI) population in Australia

• 1.3% of Australian population are of PI background

• Young population

• PI families composed of multiple family members living in the same household

• Extensive kinship networks

Top 5 PI ancestry in NSW

• Tongan
• Fijian (includes Fijian Indians)
• Samoan
• Cook Islanders
• Maori
Previous research

- Limited research done in Australia on PI Children and Young people (ChYP)

- Ravulo (2016): PI youths were over-represented in the juvenile justice system
  - Ravulo J. Pacific Communities in Australia. Sydney: University of Western Sydney; 2015.

- Burton et al (1999): PI mothers presented later for first ANC visit, increased risk of adverse perinatal outcomes
Why were we concerned?

- Clinical experience and anecdotal reports suggested that PI ChYP were over-represented in child protection clinical presentations, juvenile justice, and poor school performance.

- Health concerns including obesity, poor oral health, infectious diseases, and poor immunisation coverage.

- Health Promotion Service and Public Health Unit in SWS also identified health, wellbeing, and access concerns for PI population.
Where is South Western Sydney (SWS)?
Aims

- To describe the health and wellbeing of PI ChYP in SWS
- To identify risk and protective factors for PI ChYP
- To develop resilience enhancing interventions based on community consultation
Methods – Quantitative data sources

- Hospital separations data
- Epidemiology and public health data
- Best available data from welfare, juvenile justice, education
  - child-at-risk clinic attendance
  - acute child maltreatment assessments
  - Simple descriptive analysis was performed
Methods - Qualitative

• Focus group discussion (FGD)
  • Pacific Children, Young People and Families working group in SWS ran a PI community forum in October 2016: FGDs X 4

• Key stakeholder interviews
  • Prominent PI community members who were well known for their work with PI ChYP in SWS
  • In-depth semi-structured telephone interviews with 4 key stakeholders

• Thematic analysis carried out specifically searching across content for repeated patterns of meaning
WHAT WE FOUND
# SWS PI population

## Ancestry - Top 10 NSW LGAs ranked by size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>Pacific Islander %</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>Pacific Islander %</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campbelltown City</td>
<td>5,823</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>4,637</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>+1,186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blacktown City</td>
<td>10,159</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>8,108</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>+2,053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Griffith City</td>
<td>793</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>645</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>+253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liverpool City</td>
<td>4,191</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>3,297</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>+894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canterbury City</td>
<td>2,728</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>2,828</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>-102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auburn City</td>
<td>1,328</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>1,345</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairfield City</td>
<td>3,361</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>2,523</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>+832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botany Bay City</td>
<td>653</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>674</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holroyd City</td>
<td>1,834</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>1,380</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>+254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bankstown City</td>
<td>2,865</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>2,333</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>+532</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 1.3% of NSW population

## SWS Pregnancy and birth data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PI</th>
<th>NSW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maternal age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-19</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gestational age &lt;37 weeks</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Birth weight</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGA</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGA</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate BW</td>
<td>71.7%</td>
<td>79.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Smoking in 1st half of pregnancy</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gestational diabetes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>First antenatal visit &gt; 16 weeks</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Full breastfeeding</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>71.6%</td>
<td>81.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sourced: Australian Bureau of Statistics
Juvenile Justice (JJ) data

- October 2016: 8% of SWS Juvenile Justice clients in detention were of PI ethnicity

- Between October 2015-2016, 3% of supervision orders for Campbelltown JJ and 13% for Fairfield JJ were of PI descent
Audit of child maltreatment clinical data
Acute child maltreatment presentations


59% of PI ChYP had no carer/parent present at assessment

30% of all other ethnicities had no carer/parent present

Note: The total PI population in SWS LGAs range from 1 to 4%.
Acute child maltreatment assessments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PAN</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>JA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8%</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- PAN: 28% PI Children, 72% All other ethnicities
- SA: 8% PI Children, 92% All other ethnicities
- JA: 10% PI Children, 90% All other ethnicities
### PI ChYP demographics and outcomes - Acute Child Maltreatment assessments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average age</th>
<th>Out of home care (OOHC) placement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PI children</td>
<td>8.5 years</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All ethnicities</td>
<td>7.4 years</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Child at-risk clinics


Note: The total PI population in SWS LGAs range from 1 to 4%.
Qualitative data from PI community consultations
Strengths

- Strong and supportive family
- Connection to church
- Kinship network
- Identification with PI culture
- Education of PI ChYP
- PI community programs in SWS
Challenges

- Parental use of harsh discipline
- Financial constraints
- Language barriers
- Loss of PI culture
- Cultural expectations
- Communication difficulties
- Chronic health conditions and poor diet
Community solutions

- Culture is paramount
- Positive parenting alternatives to harsh discipline
- Targeted culturally appropriate services
- Establish a peak Pacific body of PI ChYP
Limitations

- Poor identification of the PI population in Australia
  - making collection of data on health, education, welfare, and justice difficult

- Qualitative data collected on the community were from more active community members who volunteered to participate in the community forum
Conclusion

• A disproportionate number of PI ChYP present for acute child maltreatment assessments and to child at-risk clinics in SWS

• PI ChYP are over-represented in juvenile crime statistics

• Little else known about health differentials for PI ChYP
  • anecdotal reports suggest that there may be more concerns

• There are significant PI community concerns

• There is an urgent need for better identification of PI ChYP needs in health, education, welfare, justice
We hope to build better services for this vulnerable population through community interventions that build on family and community resilience while enhancing positive parenting.
“There is a good structure within Pacific Islander communities where families look after each other” (Samoan man)

“Loss contact, loss their identity, sense of belonging and where they come from” (Tongan man)

“Our people, you know, are church goers whether they believe or not, they go, church is very big part of their life” (Tongan woman)

“Lack of language skills, language barrier” (Tongan woman)

“Back home discipline is a big thing you know. Physical discipline is how we were raised up, that’s how I was raised up. Physical discipline, you know my mum would use a wooden spoon and smack me on the head. And I did it to my kids too. Here in Australia, mentality of the Islanders is we turn out ok.” (Tongan woman)

“The culture is creating, you know, anxiety at the standard and what the family is going through because the family has to pay the rent, the bill, and top of that the family has to donate and put money in, if you are not going to put money in you are going to be flamed, and you will be abandoned” (Samoan woman)