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Social Network Analysis (SNA): Key Tool in Evaluation of the Pacific Open Learning Health Network (POLHN)

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Social Network Analysis (SNA) - mapping and measuring relationships and information flows between people, groups, and organizations - will be a key tool in ongoing evaluation of the Pacific Open Learning Health Net (POLHN). We will present SNA plans, instruments and preliminary findings/lessons learned. The following examples, for each of POLHN’s primary objectives, also relevant to other Pacific networks, indicate how SNA will be used to assess progress and develop recommendations for continued development and potential expansion:
1. Provide access to continuing education opportunities for health care workers. * SNA: Network mechanisms through which health workers learned about POLHN courses, to help increase participation. * SNA: Interactions among POLHN students, and between students and teachers, to evaluate effectiveness, beyond providing information, in creating dialogues. 2. Assist health care workers in upgrading education qualifications. * SNA: Current network of universities and institutions involved with POLHN, to identify those that could provide education qualifications and certifications and to ascertain how they and others could collaborate in providing them. 3. Provide access to health related information for health care workers in the region and globally. * SNA: Flows of POLHN-provided health information between students and their colleagues, to help understand how POLHN students share information and to help evaluate the true reach of POLHN. * SNA: Flows of health promotion information provided by POLHN between students and their patients, to help evaluate the dissemination and potential effectiveness of that information in promoting health (for example, of the courses on reproductive health counseling, diabetes and its clinical management in the Pacific, and risk communication). 4. Provide a facility for inter-country consultations and learning opportunities. * SNA: Current network of institutions and universities involved with POLHN, to find opportunities for POLHN’s participating and supporting institutions, students, teachers, and administrators to further tie into and contribute to the broader Pacific health network.

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