



From L to R Back row: Dr Mark Rokobuli (Fiji), Dr. Kabiri Itaka (Kiribati), Dr. James Tewa'ani (SI), Dr. Shaun Mauiliu (Samoa), Dr. Stephen Kodovaru (SI), Dr. Areta Samuelu (Samoa)

Front: Dr. Patrick Houasia (Director Orthopaedics NRH), Prof Nik Friederich (Basle, Switzerland)

## **New medical simulator at NRH**

Recently the National Referral Hospital was host to a sophisticated medical simulator. This was brought to NRH by the visiting team from the Pacific Islands Orthopaedic Association (PIOA). PIOA has been established in the Solomon Islands since 2012 and has been involved in training doctors to become orthopaedic surgeons from Solomon Islands, Samoa, Vanuatu, Kiribati and Fiji. Each module runs for 2 weeks and is held at NRH. Doctors from the other Pacific Island countries travel to Honiara for the training and then return home to put into practice what they have learned.

This module was focussed on medical conditions affecting the knee. The ArthroOS high tech simulator was provided on loan by VirtaMed AG. This is a Swiss company that is at the forefront of developing simulators for use in surgical training. The simulator was run by Prof Nik Friederich from Basle in Switzerland. Prof Friederich used to work with Dr Hermann Oberli from Switzerland who is a long time friend of the Solomon Islands. Other lecturers in the module included Dr. Bruce Caldwell from Sydney, Dr. Jochen Ruckstuhl from Basle and Dr. Des Soares from Brisbane. Dr. Soares is the Director of Training for PIOA.

With the use of the simulator the six trainee doctors were able to rapidly develop their skills in arthroscopy (surgery of the knee joint using small (key hole) incisions) by doing a graded learning program for 15-20 minutes each per day. They made great progress and are now ready to put their newly learned skills into practice. Dr. Patrick Houasia who is the Director of Orthopaedics at NRH commented that it was a wonderful opportunity for his trainee doctors to learn valuable new skills in a realistic setting. He also noted that this was the first time that this equipment had been anywhere in the Southern hemisphere (a real first for Solomon Islands).



Prof Nik Friederich, Dr. James Tewa'ani and Dr Shaun Mauiliu learning operating skills on the simulator.