



ORANGA WAHA: HE HUARAHI RANGAHAU

Māori Oral Health Research Agenda Summary

To have good oral health is to have the opportunity to enjoy good kai, to speak clearly, to hongī, kiss, smile and laugh, without discomfort or embarrassment. It is also to be free from active disease in the mouth that affects overall health and wellbeing.

The opportunity for good oral health is not equally available to all citizens of Aotearoa. Dental services for adults remain fundamentally outside the system of public subsidy for health care despite the growing recognition of the inter-relatedness of oral health and systemic disease. Preventive, restorative, or rehabilitative dental care is accessible to the affluent but often unattainable to those who are less well-off.

Due to the way New Zealand society structures opportunities and wealth, Māori are at greater risk of having low disposable incomes and diminished access to dental care. The values, norms, policies, and practices of an ableist society are also manifest in inequities in the determinants of health for people with disabilities. Poor oral health in turn impacts socioeconomic prospects.

In 2009 the Ministry of Health and the Health Research Council of New Zealand funded Te Rōpū Rangahau Hauora a Eru Pōmare, University of Otago, and community group partners* to identify oral health research priorities that will contribute to improved oral health and reduced disparities for three priority populations: Māori adults with low incomes, older Māori, and Māori of all ages who have special needs, disabilities, or medical conditions that affect oral health or dental care.

The research used a mix of qualitative and quantitative enquiry, including: surveys, interviews and focus groups with a range of Māori communities and with people working in the health and disability sector; statistical analyses of public hospital admissions for oral disease and injury, and of oral cancer registrations and deaths; a review of oral health data sources; and a comprehensive literature review. The findings were discussed at a national workshop of key stakeholders where research topics were developed and prioritised, along with the vision and principles underpinning the research agenda.

This document presents a summary of the research agenda published in *Oranga Waha – Oral health research priorities for Māori: low income adults, kaumātua and Māori with disabilities, special needs or chronic conditions* by Robson et al (2011). The full book can be found on www.otago.ac.nz/uow or www.maorihealth.govt.nz

The vision of “oranga waha mō te iwi Māori katoa”, good oral health for **all** Māori, for life, acknowledges the Crown’s and society’s obligation to tackle the major access and equity issues that affect Māori whānau with low incomes, kaumātua, and Māori with disabilities, special needs, or chronic health conditions.

Based on the Treaty of Waitangi, an ideal oral health system enables Māori communities, individuals, and whānau to create environments conducive to health, puts prevention of disease and injury at the front line, and intervenes as early as possible within the disease process. It is accessible to all, especially those facing greater oral health risks, inclusive, evidence-based, sustainable, and responsive to changing needs and effective innovative developments. An ideal system ‘treats whānau not age’, is culturally safe, has a well-supported workforce, is integrated with all health care, crosses health professions and sectors, and overcomes distance barriers. This research agenda aims to contribute to a health system that progressively fulfils the right to good oral health for all Māori.

This research agenda seeks to encourage research that will be transformative – research that changes the inherent nature of the oral health care system to better meet the needs and rights of Māori whānau, and that creates environments and living conditions conducive to good oral health. It is congruent with Ngā Pou Kōrero, the Strategic Plan for Māori Health Research which supports the expression of rangatiratanga and mātauranga. It is intended to be inclusive of all types of research.

* Partners include: Te Ao Marama, the New Zealand Māori Dental Association; Tipu Ora Charitable Trust; Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira; Ngāti Pahauwera Hauora Society; Tū Kotahi Māori Asthma Trust, Kōkiri Marae, Seaview; Rāta te Āwhina Trust; Alzheimers New Zealand Inc.

VISION	<p>Oranga waha mō te iwi Māori katoa <i>Good oral health for all Māori, for life</i></p> <p>A sustainable, high quality, responsive and inclusive health system that progressively fulfils the right to oral health for all Māori, including adults with low incomes, older adults, and Māori of all ages who have special needs, disabilities, or conditions that affect oral health and/or health care.</p>				
PATHWAYS	<p>Whānau, hapu, iwi, community development</p> <p>Research on the most effective ways for Māori communities to increase:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Knowledge and understanding of: oral health risks, how to maintain good oral health, including traditional methods and rongoā, rights and entitlements, and how to access dental care (including preventive, specialist, dentures) > Knowledge and support for people with disabilities to independently access oral health services and improve their oral health, and support for their whānau members. > Control of environmental determinants of oral health > Financial resources and political influence over decisions affecting oral health and the provision of oral health care in their community 	<p>Māori participation</p> <p>Research on the most effective ways to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Increase Māori provider capacity to deliver oral health services > Develop the Māori oral health workforce (including new types of oral health workers, and other health professionals in primary care and public health) > Increase knowledge of oral health and best practice care among non-dental health and disability support providers to Māori, including people with disabilities 	<p>Effective health services</p> <p>Research to develop, compare, and evaluate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Innovative models of oral health care for effectiveness for Māori > Legislative, regulatory, financial, and workforce changes required to achieve a sustainable, high quality, inclusive, oral health system for all Māori. > Ways to integrate oral health into models of care for chronic conditions > How to tackle the maldistribution of dental professionals > Interventions to enable disabled Māori to receive good oral health care from 'ordinary services' and increased access to specialist care when necessary 	<p>Working across sectors</p> <p>Research on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The social, economic, and cultural impact of improving oral health for Māori adults and Māori with disabilities > Addressing the unequal distribution of the determinants of oral health > Barriers to and facilitators of environmental protection of oral health for Māori > Injury prevention in areas with high rates of fractured jaw among Māori 	<p>Monitoring, research, and evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Research on ways to systematically monitor progress towards the right to oral health for Māori with different types of disabilities, including health service utilisation and performance > Develop evaluation models for existing and new models of oral health care relevant to Māori values and desired outcomes > Develop methods to ensure mana whakamaarama (equal explanatory power) in research for Māori with disabilities > Mechanisms to disseminate research findings to Māori communities, and other decision-makers, to maximise uptake and impact
TRANSFORMATIVE RESEARCH AREAS					
PRINCIPLES	<p>Facing inequities Kaupapa Māori Research translated into action Intergenerational health justice</p> <p>“Nothing about us without us” Prevention at the front line Building research capacity & control within Māori communities Research encompasses the past, the present & the future</p> <p>Tika Whānau approach Community ownership The spark of mauri!</p> <p>Manaakitanga Kaitiakitanga Quality science Reciprocity</p>				