

## **Rangatahi Māori and the Changing Tides of Substance Use: A comparative thematic analysis study.**

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Substance use (tobacco, alcohol, cannabis) among teenagers has decreased over the last two decades. In Aotearoa, there is a small proportion of young people who continue to engage in substance use, and Māori rangatahi make up a larger percentage of these users (when compared to their peers). The reasons behind these trends remain unclear, but it is possible that the social meanings of substance use (including smoking) have influenced young people's attitudes and behaviours, contributing to the overall decline. Our presentation focuses on exploring the changing experiences and social meanings of substance use for Māori rangatahi. To accomplish this, we conducted a comparative thematic analysis of two cohorts of rangatahi Māori aged 14-17 years: the first cohort (n = 26) was interviewed between 1999 and 2001, and the second cohort (n = 27) was interviewed in 2022. We will present the findings and implications of this study, with a particular emphasis on identifying ways to support the continued decline in substance use among the next generation of Māori rangatahi.