



Gut Symptom Investigation: Te Waipounamu

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Christchurch

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Why do this study?

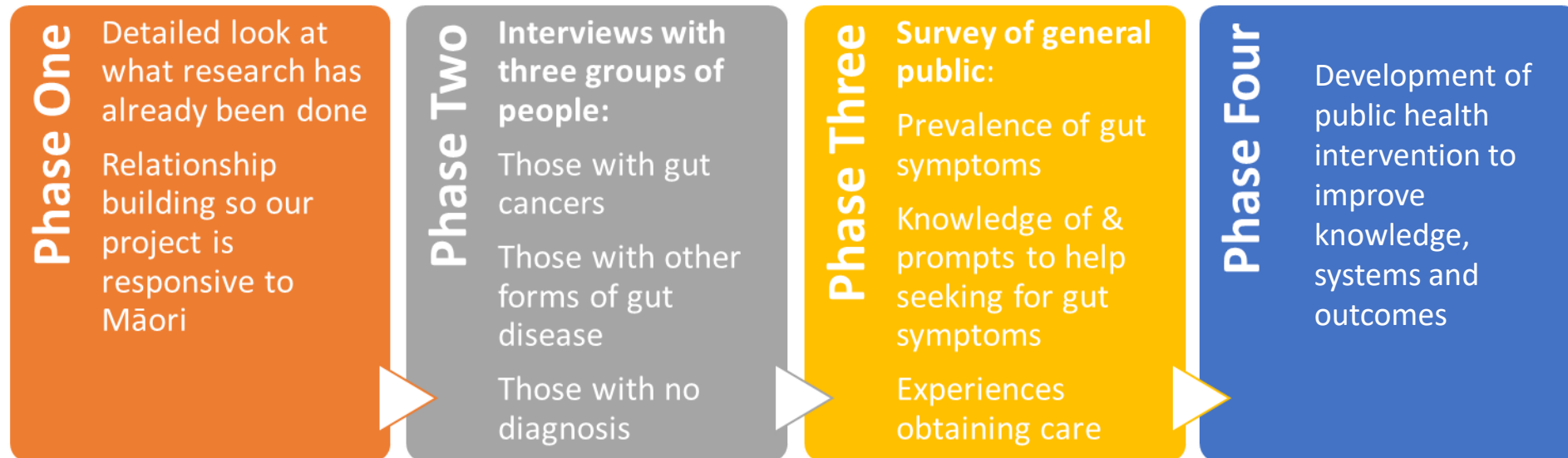
- High rates of gut disease in Te Waipounamu
- Late diagnosis is a problem
- Māori tend to have worse outcomes than Pākehā



It is likely that there are **individual** and **systems** factors that matter

Overseas studies tell us some helpful things. Our health system and geography is particular. We needed to understand what specific barriers are relevant here in Te Waipounamu

Phases of Gut Symptom Investigation Te Waipounamu Study



Qualitative study: Phase Two

- Usual approvals for University-based research studies
 - Ethical approval: University of Otago Human Ethics Committee (Health)
 - Multiple District Health Board Locality approvals
 - Māori consultation

Qualitative interviews

- 44 in-depth face-to-face interviews around Te Waipounamu
 - 16 Māori; 28 non-Māori

Ashburton
Nelson
Waipahi Hokitika Te Anau
Lyttelton Tokanui
Timaru Greymouth Ross Blenheim Mosburn
Kaiapoi Dunedin
Westport Queenstown
Christchurch
Ranfurly



Barriers to early diagnosis

Vague symptoms

What is normal?

Trouble or discomfort
accessing GP

Stereotyping

Declined referrals



... we know that something's not right, and that's not helpful for the medical profession, because if you go in and sit in front of them when you've got ... a 5 or 10 minute appointment and you're like, "Something's not right...I've got a funny tummy," which is pretty non-specific. Well, what are they going to do, you know?

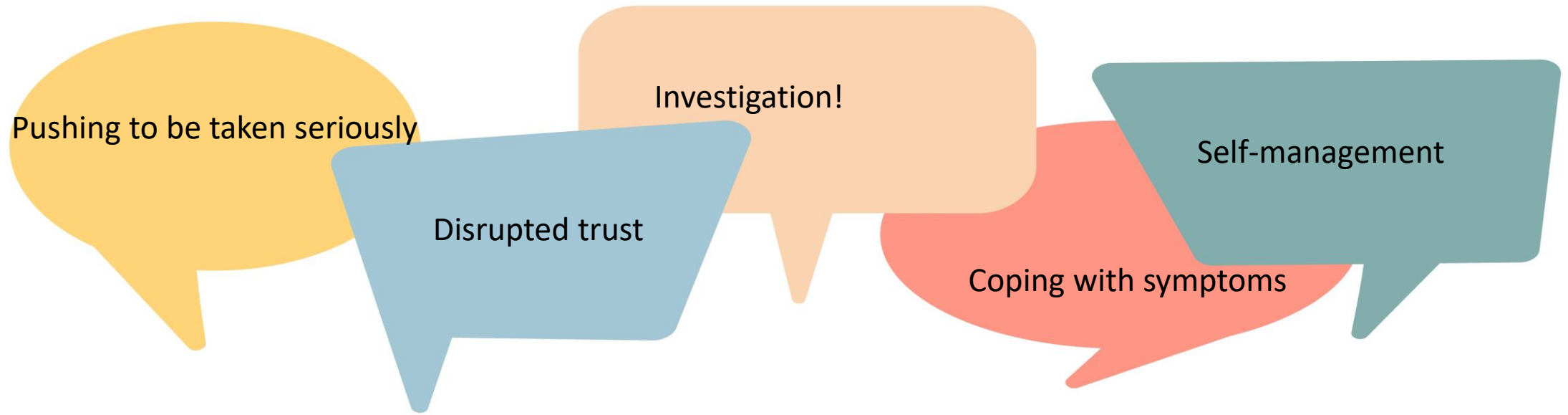
Yeah, didn't feel comfortable going to the doctors about it as well. So, I just kind of thought it was just going to pass. Sucked it up and carried on.

I'm still not educated with what's wrong with me or what's normal. I'm not told that a rumbling stomach isn't normal or that ...lower intestine cramps is normal or not. Should I be terribly worried about that? ... I don't know what I don't know What is normal?

We're not coming back and back and back just for fun. It's costing a lot of money We are coming because we have genuine reasons and if you can't find a diagnosis, actually look and think who else could find something.

Everyone was accusing me of an eating disorder, but I actually had coeliac disease. So, that ... was quite traumatic, I suppose. Like I had like lots of people accusing me of vomiting up my food and not eating and stuff, but in reality, I was eating and feeling really sick.

Moving towards a diagnosis – or not...



If you think there's something wrong, make your point and don't leave it

Like it was 2 years I didn't know what was wrong with me. 10 minutes later ... I'm in the hospital, getting checked up.

...you don't want to be a pain, I guess. You don't want to keep nagging all the time, depending on what it is. Sometimes I think I would go to Christchurch, I would go privately, find someone else.

"That's pretty much all we can do for you." ... It still causes a certain level of anxiety ... especially when you start a new job, the toilet situation. ... Gosh, I've had jobs in the past where I used to drive home at lunchtime every time just to use my own toilet.

I asked a few different doctors their opinion and they had all said, "Oh no, no, don't. There's no research. It doesn't support it, and no, it won't work." But all the research online ... and different ones that had IBS, they were all saying, yes, it does. ... So, I just tried it and it seemed to make a difference...Less bloating, not the same intense pain

Māori experiences

Talking about the gut

Confidence talking
to doctors

What is serious enough?

Being brushed off

Responsive health care



The body is something that's sacred and not really discussed about.... Growing up we never really talked about gut health, but having a healthy puku, I think, growing up, was more like, you're fed – if you're fed, then you're healthy....We weren't educated on what's good for our health, for our puku. We were educated on how to gather kai, how to cook it, and how to be grateful for it.

So that was something that I was raised on as a young boy, and by listening to, you know, how the system treated our people, my experiences of my grandparents or my mother growing up in this country I was raised only to go to the doctor unless you're about to die basically.

When you're in that survival mode and you're trying to search for yourself, or you might not have any mana, but once you find your voice and you feel you have confidence to actually speak up

Well I had bad gastro problems with reflux, and then it got to a point where I was gagging on everything I ate and drank. They kept giving me pills to help with the reflux, but it wasn't curing anything....You put your faith in professionals, I suppose.

It hasn't been until I've seen a Māori GP that the things that I've been talking about have been taken seriously.... It's felt like she's the first GP that's ever really got me and that I haven't had to become exasperated with to be heard and for steps to be taken. Which has felt really validating.

Conclusions

- An information and support tool for lay people may help address barriers by providing:
 - Prompts for people to note duration, frequency, intensity and combination of symptoms
 - Tips on how to present symptoms to a doctor
 - Encouragement to persist if they have on-going concerns
- Models of care that are responsive to Māori already exist and would help promote culturally responsive clinical competence through:
 - Wider dissemination in routine professional development for primary care health professionals

Image Source

Image of people with speech bubbles:

https://stock.adobe.com/nz/images/people-avatars-with-speech-bubbles-men-and-woman-communication-talking-illustration-coworkers-team-thinking-question-idea-brainstorm-concept/333981683?prev_url=detail