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The role and potential of community based cancer care for Māori in Aotearoa/New Zealand

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Abstract

There are unacceptable ethnic differences in cancer survival in Aotearoa/New Zealand and quality of life differs between Māori and non-Māori at all stages of the cancer journey. Overseas studies have recognised that all the priorities for cancer services are affected by actions in primary care – reducing the risk of cancer, early detection and faster access to specialist treatment, improved support for patients living with cancer, and reducing inequalities. Additionally, the importance of strategic policy to direct practical and effective community-based cancer care has also been identified. Māori health provider organisations have been using a ‘Whānau Ora’ approach to provide primary health care services for over twenty years; however their contributions to cancer care have been largely invisible. This qualitative study explores the role and potential of community based cancer care for Māori as a means to addressing three study questions:

- What helps patients and whānau to access and receive cancer services?
- What is the role of primary care, which includes Māori health providers and mainstream providers, in facilitating access into and through cancer care services?
- Does current cancer control policy adequately address Māori needs?

Using a case study approach, participants from four areas of cancer care were recruited within a Māori-centred, ethic of care framework, to explore the experiences of those who plan, manage and administer, deliver, and receive cancer care. The main source of data was in-depth semi-structured interviews.

The key themes identified from this research are that: whānau hold critical and multiple roles across cancer care; there are gaps in supportive cancer care and information that is appropriate for Māori; ongoing relationships with a primary

health care provider assist whānau to navigate their cancer journeys, with Māori health providers in particular, delivering wide ranging cancer care services, and linking patients with mainstream services; engaging successfully with the cancer care system currently requires an individual rather than collective approach; cultural safety education should extend across all cancer care services; communication between cancer care providers is improving and; cancer control policy in Aotearoa has a universal focus which does not adequately address Māori needs.

The role of primary care is pivotal in Māori cancer care access, from prevention through to survival, and must be at the forefront of cancer policy.

Acknowledgement of the different support and quality of life needs of Māori, including recognition of the interdependence of whānau as a strength, is required. Māori health providers have the potential to play a much greater role in cancer care and support, but sustainable funding models are required if Māori health providers are to continue, and expand on, the wide range of work that they undertake within their communities. The newly implemented Whānau Ora Initiatives may provide a vehicle for provision of sustainable community cancer care services.

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Glossary

Aotearoa	Land of the long white cloud. New Zealand
awhi	embrace, support
hapū	sub tribe
hīmene	hymn
hinengaro	mental state
hui	meeting

iwi	tribe
kai	food
kaimahi	worker
kanohi	face
kanohi ki te kanohi	face to face
karakia	prayer
kaumātua	elder
kaupapa	topic, idea, foundation
Kaupapa Māori	Māori foundation
Kite	basket
Kohanga reo	Māori language nests
Ko wai au	What do I bring to this?
korero	talk, to speak
Māori	normal (also the name of the Indigenous people of Aotearoa)
Māoridom	the Māori world
marae	meeting ground
manuhiri	visitors, or proper behaviour with new people
matua	father
mihi	greet
mirimiri	massage
mokopuna (or moko)	grandchildren
noho whakaiti	appropriately quiet and watchful
ora	wellness
Pākehā	descendants of colonial settlers from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales
Pounamu	greenstone
rongoā	medicine
tane/tāne	man/men

tamariki/tāmariki	child/children
tangata whenua	people of the land
tapu	sacred, forbidden
Te Ao Māori	the Māori world
Te Reo Māori	the Māori language
Te wanatanga katoa	complete governance
tikanga Māori	Māori values and beliefs
tinana	physical body
tūpuna	ancestor
wahine/wāhine	woman/women
waiata	song
wairua	spirit
whakairo	carving
whakamā	shy
whakapapa	genealogical table, cultural identity
whānau	people connected by whakapapa or kaupapa
whānau ora	healthy families
whenua	land
whakapapa	lineage, genealogical table, cultural identity
whanaungatanga	relationship, kinship
whare	house
wairua	spirit, attitude

Abbreviations

CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CCDHB	Capital and Coast District Health Board
CCNZ	Cancer Control New Zealand
DHB	District Health Board
DNA	Did Not Attend
GP	General Practitioner
HRC	Health Research Council
IPA	Independent Practitioner Association
ISP	Independent Service Provider
KOETI	Kia Ora e Te Iwi
MWWL	Māori Women's Welfare League
NSU	National Screening Unit
NZ	New Zealand
PHO	Primary Health Organisation
UN	United Nations
WHO	World Health Organisation
WINZ	Work and Income New Zealand