

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

UNDERSTANDING MĀORI YOUTH SMOKING

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in Psychology
at Massey University, Albany,
New Zealand

MELANIE NEPE

2007

ABSTRACT

The understanding of Māori youth smoking from a qualitative perspective has been neglected in the literature. While there has been a wide scope of research detailing the promoting and protective factors that put Māori youth at risk to smoking, there continues to be a high rate of smoking for Māori youth, particularly among young Māori females.

This research endeavoured to discover what smoking means to Māori youth, and to explore the relationship between Māori youth smoking, and the effect that culture plays in the development of smoking behaviour.

An objective of this research was to gather data that can inform and contribute to existing knowledge about Māori youth smoking, for the development of youth tobacco interventions.

A qualitative study using focus groups were conducted to explore the meaning of smoking to Māori youth. The youth were aged 15-18 years of age. The focus groups explored the roles and meanings of smoking in Māori youth lives, by exploring their smoking histories, and maintenance processes involved in their daily experiences of smoking.

Findings showed the initiation of smoking was strongly related to peer group membership. Role modeling by family and peers influenced smoking, with the progression of smoking linked to smoking etiquette and transition to adulthood. Maintenance of smoking was related to emotional well being and the normalization of smoking behaviour. Tobacco use was regarded as an important and enjoyable aspect of many of the participants' lives.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Nei rā āku mihi maioha ki taku whānau mo te kaha tautoko i ahau. Ki taku hoa pūmau me āku tamariki hoki, āku mihi, āku tangi kōrero ki a koutou katoa.

Nei rā hoki te tuku mihi ki āku hoa kaimahi o Ngā Miro. Mei kore koutou kua kore e tutuki. Ki āku hoa tautoko, me pēwhea rā. Nei rā ahau e whakamihi ki a koutou katoa.

I am extremely grateful to my supervisor Kerry Chamberlain, for the time and support he gave me throughout this research. His guidance and patience made completing my thesis a much more accomplishable task.

Many thanks to all the remarkable people who shared their input and gave their valuable time to helping me bring this research together.

And finally, I wish to thank all the rangatahi who had given their time to korero with me, and share their experiences. There would be no research if it were not for you. My deepest thanks.

I wish you all the best...

Pai Mārire

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Introduction.....	1
Background Information.....	2
Literature	4
Tobacco in New Zealand Society.....	4
Smoking Prevalence in New Zealand.....	4
Population.....	5
Gender.....	6
Socio-Economic Inequality and Smoking.....	8
Tobacco – The Cost to Society.....	8
Tobacco Control.....	9
Smoke-Free Policy.....	11
Contextualising Ethnicity, Inequality and Smoking in New Zealand.....	13
Māori and Smoking.....	13
History of Tobacco Use Among Māori.....	14
Māori Health and Smoking.....	14
Smoking and Māori	15
Māori Youth and Smoking.....	17

Māori Identity.....	18
Identity Theories.....	20
Role Theory.....	21
Social Identity Theory.....	22
Cultural Identity.....	22
Smoking and Adolescence.....	23
Adolescent Females and Smoking.....	24
Addiction.....	25
Method.....	26
Participants.....	26
Setting.....	27
Method.....	28
Analysis.....	30
Findings.....	32
Identity as a Smoker.....	32
The First Time Smoker.....	32
Peers.....	34
Rebellion.....	37
Youth Independence.....	39
Full On Now.....	41
Stress Me Out.....	44
The Identity of a Māori Smoker.....	47

Discussion.....	52
Identity as a Smoker.....	54
Non-Smokers.....	58
Māori Culture and Smoking.....	58
Conclusion.....	61
References.....	63