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**Rangatahi Oranga:
Family functioning, cultural orientation and depression among New
Zealand adolescents**

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ABSTRACT

Mental health disparities between Maori and NZ European adolescents are well documented. Cultural-vulnerability theory posits that cultural dimensions may explain some of the difference in distress levels between different ethnic groups. The aim of this research was to explore the relationships between family functioning, cultural orientation and depression among NZ Maori and NZ European adolescents and examine whether cultural orientation - individualism and collectivism - would moderate the relationship between perceived family functioning and depression scores. Self-report data assessing individualism, collectivism, family functioning and depression were collected from 299 Maori and NZ European high school adolescents. Family dysfunction was found to positively correlate with depression scores for adolescents in both groups, however the relationship was stronger for adolescent males than females, and for NZ Europeans than Maori adolescents, and the relationship was strongest for Maori male adolescents specifically. The study's major findings were that collectivism had a moderating effect on the relationship between family functioning and depression for NZ European females only, and that for Maori male adolescents who were highly individualistic, family functioning accounted for 20% of the variance in depression scores. A further finding was that Maori adolescents displayed both highly individualistic and highly collectivistic tendencies, which indicates that there may be multiple culture-related pathways to depression for Maori youths. The findings suggest that Maori male adolescents may be more vulnerable to the deleterious effects of family dysfunction than Maori females, especially if they display tendencies towards individualism. The implications for these and other findings are discussed.

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