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**TE MAHI KAIPAIPA I WAENGANUI I NGA TAMAHINE
MAORI: NGA AHUATANGA E PA ANA KI ENEI
TAWAITANGA**

**YOUNG MAORI WOMEN AND SMOKING: KNOWLEDGE,
ATTITUDES, INITIATION AND MAINTENANCE**

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

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1995

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ABSTRACT

Cigarette smoking leads to many of the most harmful diseases of our time. The prevalence of smoking is excessively high amongst young Maori women. Most research has focused on knowledge of the health consequences associated with smoking, and attitudes toward cigarette smoking. Teaching individuals of the health consequences of smoking and attempting to change individuals' assumed positive attitudes toward smoking have been the basis for smoking prevention and cessation programmes. Recent research suggests these programmes are ineffective in preventing or eliminating smoking. The process of initiation into cigarette smoking is not well understood. Also, the maintenance of cigarette smoking after initiation is not well understood. This is a mixed method study with young Maori women participants. The study includes both smokers and non-smokers. Non-smokers are almost always excluded from research into smoking but are a valuable source of information on smoking. A quantitative methodology was employed and a questionnaire developed to investigate young Maori women's knowledge and attitudes toward cigarette smoking. A qualitative methodology was used and a semi-structured ^{interview} developed to explore young Maori women's thoughts, feelings and experiences of initiation and maintenance of cigarette smoking. The aims of this study are to assess participants' knowledge of the health consequences of smoking and participants' attitudes toward smoking. The study also explores participants' thoughts, feelings and experiences of smoking with an emphasis on the initiation and maintenance of smoking behaviour. Results indicate participants possess good knowledge of the health consequences of smoking. Participants were found to possess negative attitudes toward smoking. However, smokers were found to have more positive attitudes toward smoking than non-smokers. These findings are consistent with previous research. Results also indicate that social factors play the greatest role in both initiation and maintenance of smoking in young Maori women. Recommendations for future research and practical suggestions for prevention and cessation programmes are made.

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