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**What really does it have to do with Osteopathy
anyway?**

**New Zealand osteopath practitioners talk about
rural Māori health**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Masters of Health Science
In Māori mental health

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New Zealand.

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Abstract

This thesis reports findings from a qualitative research project, investigating how New Zealand osteopath practitioners talk about rural Māori health. The primary research question asked, *How can osteopath practitioners contribute to rural Māori well-being (with a specific focus on the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of osteopath practitioners practicing in New Zealand)?* Secondary aims were to ascertain the sources of information used and accessibility of osteopathy health care, the prevalence of musculo-skeletal disorders among rural Māori, as well as identifying the tensions and factors associated with rural osteopathy practice.

The data was collected from semi-structured interviews with eight osteopath practitioners working in Hawke's Bay on the topic of rural Māori health, and subjected to detailed qualitative narrative analysis. This analysis identified critical patterning of particular topics, revealed by practitioners in their interviews, bringing to light themes.

The research findings showed that osteopath practitioners viewed engagement and effective relationship building as vital to their clinical practice with rural Māori. They also exhibited a willingness to acknowledge culture and recognise the Treaty of Waitangi in their daily practice, but often sought clarity on how this could be achieved. The potential for collaboration between Māori health perspectives and the osteopathy scientific tradition was high as they were shown to share a number of philosophical positions.

Acknowledgements

This thesis is about sharing a journey of rural Māori and osteopath practitioner development. From the outset it has been about learning to be a researcher and understanding this shared history, of Māori and Pākehā (non-Māori) within the context of osteopathy health care.

This journey has been shared with others and I would like to offer my thanks to some key people who have supported and contributed to this process:

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