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Ngā Kairaranga Oranga
The Weavers of Health and Wellbeing:
A grounded theory study

A thesis presented in fulfilment
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Denise Lucy Wilson
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Abstract

Ngā Kairaranga Oranga – The Weavers of Health and Wellbeing is a theory about the health and wellbeing of Māori women. Health data about Māori women indicate that their health status is less than that of the non-Māori population despite the right to experience equality in health outcomes. Māori women's health and wellbeing influences the nature of their health outcomes, varies across their lifetime. 'What is happening for Māori women, their health and interactions with 'mainstream' health services?' is the question that guided the research with Māori women. A grounded theory informed by a Māori centred approach was developed that utilised Mason Durie's Māori-centred concepts of mana Māori (control), whakapiki tangata (enablement) and whakatuia (integration), and integrated Glaserian grounded theory to guide the collection and analysis of the data. Twenty-three women who identified as Māori within the Te Arawa rohe, and who were between the ages of 18 and 80 years were formally interviewed as either a group, pairs or individuals, with a further 15 informally interviewed during the process of theoretical sampling. Semi-structured interviews and field notes were used to collect the data, and the processes of constant comparative analysis, theoretical sampling and saturation were used to generate a middle-range substantive Māori centred grounded theory. Three core categories were identified relating to the health and wellbeing of Māori women: (a) *Mana Māori*, which describes what is important for their health and wellbeing; (b) *The Way It Is*, which outlines the resigned acceptance they have of their reality and life circumstances, and the barriers and challenges that are encountered; and (c) *Engaging with Health Services*, which describes what they require from 'mainstream' health services to improve the access and use of these services. The basic social psychological process of 'weaving health and wellbeing' integrates these core categories. The interpretations Māori women have of health and wellbeing, and health-related actions are explained by the theory generated. This substantive grounded theory provides a model to guide the education and practice of health care providers working within 'mainstream' health services.

Preface

Whakataka te hau ki te uru
Whakataka te hau ki te tonga
Kia makinakina ki uta
Kia matarata ki tai
Kia hi ake ana te atakura
He tio, he huka, he hauhu
Tihei mauri ora!

Ko Tainui te waka
Ko Karioi te maunga
Ko Whaingaroa te moana
Ko Tainui te iwi
Ko Ngati Tahinga te hapū
Ko Denise Wilson ahau

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, katoa
Ngā mihi nui ki te koutou katoa.

Before I begin, I want to acknowledge our tupuna, wāhine Māori (especially those who have dedicated their lives to improving the health and wellbeing of Māori), and our mokopuna, and the contribution that they make, or have made, to the health and the wellbeing of whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori communities.

In undertaking research for a PhD degree, it was important to me that I would produce something that could make a contribution to improving the health of Māori, and more specifically Māori women. The impetus for this research arose out of my role as a

registered nurse, the concerns about the appropriateness of some health services delivered to Māori, and my observations of community and acute 'mainstream' health services. These concerns and observations raised many questions about the effectiveness of the interactions between health providers and Māori women. Fundamentally I wanted to know, 'What is happening for Māori women using 'mainstream' health services?' Despite the growth in Māori focused health services, Māori will continue to require 'mainstream' health services. The delivery of appropriate and acceptable services, therefore, is crucial to improving the health outcomes of Māori.

Ngā Kairaranga Oranga – The Weavers of Health and Wellbeing is about the strengths that these women have, and use on a daily basis, to maintain the health and wellbeing of themselves and their whānau. These strengths often go unnoticed by health care providers, yet they are a vital part of improving the health outcomes of wāhine Māori. The foundation on which the research and this thesis are based recognises that wāhine Māori are the holders of knowledge about health and wellbeing within their cultural context and life circumstances. They are the kaitiaki of whānau ora...

Ko te mana o wāhine Māori
Ko rātou te whare tangata
Te kairaranga oranga.
Ko te kaitiaki o whānau ora
Tihei mauri ora!

The integrity of Māori women
Who are the bearers of life,
The weavers of health and wellbeing.
The guardians of whānau health & wellbeing.

Acknowledgements

E hara taku toa, I te toa takitahi
Katahi o taku toa, he toa takitini

Mine is not the strength of one alone; it is the strength of many.

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Glossary

A

Aroha – love
Atua – gods

H

Hapū – wider, extended family
Harakeke – flax
He korowai oranga – the cloak of wellness
Hinengaro – mind, intellect
Hui – gathering, meeting

I

Iwi – tribe

K

Kai - food
Kaitiaki – guardian
Kanohi kitea – known face
Karakia – prayer, incantation
Kaumatua - elder
Kaupapa – strategy or a theme
Kawa – protocol
Kawanatanga - governorship
Kete – basket
Kete taonga – important basket of knowledge
Koha - gift
Kohanga reo – preschool Māori language nests
Kōrerō – talk, speak
Kowhaiwhai – scroll painting on rafters

M

Mahikai – preparing food
Maketu – illness of a spiritual origin with physical manifestations
Mākū – wet, damp
Makutu – indirect punishment inflicted by someone
Mana – prestige
Manaaki – caring for others
Mātauranga – information, knowledge, education
Mate Māori – sickness, death or an unconscious problem with a spiritual origin
Ma te wā – perception of time
Matua – parent or main stem of flax
Mirimiri - massage
Mokopuna – grandchildren

N

Noa – common, free from tapu

P

Pākehā – non-Māori, European, Caucasian

Papatuanuku – the earth mother

Poutama – step pattern on tukutuku (ornamental) panels

R

Ranganui – the sky father

Rangatiratanga – sovereignty, supremacy

Raranga – weaving of kete

Rito – central shoot of the harakeke (flax)

Rohe – region, area

Rongoā – traditional Māori ‘medicine’

T

Tane – male

Taonga – treasure, property

Tamariki – children

Tangata whenua – people of the land

Tangi – mourning for those who have passed away (died)

Tapu – sacred, forbidden

Tātou tātou – sharing of property

Teina-tuakana – younger-older

Te ao Māori – the world of Māori

Te ao Pākehā – the world of Pākehā

Te kore – void or nothing

Te reo – Māori language

Te whare tangata – house of learning

Tikanga - custom

Tinana – physical body

Tino rangatiratanga – self-determination, control

Tohunga – traditional Māori healer, expert

Tua haere – people living away from area or whānau

Tupuna - ancestors

W

Wahine – woman

Wāhine – women

Wairua - spirit

Wairuatanga - spirituality

Wananga – learning, series of discussion

Whakamā – embarrassment, shame, shyness

Whakapapa – genealogy

Whakawhanaungatanga – process of establishing relationships and connections

Whakataukī - proverb

Whānau – family, extended family

Whanaungatanga – relationships, connections, networks

Whānau ora – family health and wellbeing

Whenua – land, placenta

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

*Hutia te rito
Hutia te rito o te harakeke
Kei hea te komako e ko
Ki mai ki ahau*

*He aha te mea nui
He aha te mea nui o te ao
Maku e ki atu
He tangata, he tangata, He tangata hei*

If the centre of the shoot of the flax is pulled out,
Where will the bellbird sing?
If you were to ask me what is the most important thing in the world? I would reply,
It is the people, it is the people, it is the people.

(Whakatauki/waiata from Te Rarawa)

The entitlement to optimal health and wellbeing is a right of all members of society. Despite this right, disparities in health status exist among the various groups within our communities. While the causation of disparities is complex, many causes often lie outside the control of individuals. Māori women are one group who experience poorer health status when compared to most other groups within New Zealand. The multidimensional nature of health and wellbeing involves spiritual, psychological, socio-cultural, and physical dimensions - it is more than being physically well or healthy. Importantly, optimal health and wellbeing requires each of the dimensions to be in