

Kaupapa Hauora and quality services — an exploratory study of a changing concept

Understanding changes in traditional concepts behind Maori health and how these relate to the contemporary New Zealand health system has been the focus of an HRC PhD project.

Mrs Janice Wenn from the Research Centre for Maori Health & Development at Massey University set out to identify changes over time in the meaning of the term 'hauora' and to develop a definition for use in the current health service environment that would preserve the traditional meaning while incorporating the essential identified quality elements.

She also intended to provide a definition of 'kaupapa Maori' for health service application and to establish what the quality determinants of a 'kaupapa Maori' health service are.

Mrs Wenn engaged with 40 kaumatua from Ngati Kaungunu and nga iwi o Taranaki who identified eight key values that were integral to hauora (optimal health and wellbeing). The values identified by kaumatua were whakapapa, (ones genealogical roots and the interrelationship of factors such as the elements, the environment and the elements) wairua (Spirituality that has its base in Te Ao Maori), whenua (land that has a significant influence upon the other stated values), whanau (family including the extended group an individual relates to in a special way), tikanga (recognising and carrying out that which is regarded as tika or correct in given circumstances) te reo Maori (the language of Maori, given to them by their tipuna and belonging to them), tinana (physical health) and hinengaro (emotional health). Mrs Wenn found that interviews with the kaumatua frequently generated explanations and stories that reinforced their understanding of the values they had identified.

Mrs Wenn says the stories focused on education, in particular the Marae-based education they had received since birth, poverty, ill health, the influence of early education on entering the workforce and the migratory patterns some had experienced. This underlying conceptual framework was applied in an analytical research model to identify kaupapa hauora Maori in a range of data.

Mrs Wenn identified a need for Maori health providers to ensure that all persons involved in health service development and delivery understood the organisations' philosophy and values and ensured that all aspects of the organisation's work reflected these.

"My initial approach to Maori health providers revealed that although the concept of kaupapa hauora Maori was accepted in principle, the identification and understanding of the underlying value was diverse," Mrs Wenn says.

The project also aimed its approach at governance and management. Mrs Wenn found that disparities existed between the identification of values, the understanding participants had of these values and how they would be reflected in practice.

"From this, there has emerged a need to establish a process that demonstrates the degree of congruence between identification, understanding and application of any provider value base," she says.

Since her initial work, Mrs Wenn has been approached by three Maori health providers to assist them to establish their values base and to develop standards and criteria that will assist them in ensuring that the stated values are understood and applied to all aspects of the work undertaken.

Mrs Wenn hopes that by establishing a consistency in the meaning of these terms, the process of defining cultural determinants can become a reality.

This research is funded by the Health Research Council of New Zealand.

HRC89 2007
Level 3, 110 Stanley Street, Auckland PO Box 5541,
Wellesley Street, Auckland, NZ
Telephone 64 9 303 5200 Facsimile 64 9 377 9988
Website www.hrc.govt.nz



Mrs Janice Wenn

Key words:

- Kaupapa Hauora, health services

Aims of this research:

- To identify changes over time in the meaning of the term 'hauora' and to develop a definition for use in the current health service environment that would preserve the traditional meaning while incorporating the essential identified quality elements.

What this research has shown:

- Disparities exist in the identification of values by health service providers
- Maori health providers need to ensure all persons involved in health service development and delivery understand the organization's philosophy and values
- There is a need to establish a contingency in the meaning of these terms so the process of defining cultural determinants can become a reality.