

Increased suicide rate amongst Maori

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Introduction:

Suicide is a significant issue in New Zealand. Last year alone 437 New Zealanders committed suicide (Ministry of Justice, 2015). Of these 437 people 16% were Maori. The Ministry of Health (2016), states that Maori are 1.8 times more likely to take their own life compared to non- Maori.

The facts:

- Maori are over represented in suicide statistics, with 16% off people who takes their own life are Maori.
- The Maori ethnic group makeup 15% of the total population in New Zealand (Statistics NZ, 2013)
- Suicide is the second highest cause of death in Mew Zealand amongst Maori men (MoH, 2015)

Causative factors:

There many influencing factors that contribute towards an individual's decision to take their own life (MoH, 2016). Although, with varying individual factors that influence each young person's decision to commit suicide. Factors include substance abuse and mood disorders are strongly linked to suicide amongst the younger members of our society (BPAC, 2010) as well as other risk factors which include a history of suicidal behaviour, traumatic events, social and educational disadvantages, and identity issues. The risk of suicide is susceptible to changeable factors, which in turn can increase a person's vulnerability. Beautrais (2006), emphasized that there were varying levels of risk factors ranging genetic and biological factors, social and demographic factors, childhood adversity, and personality traits and cognitive styles. Fergusson (1999), also demonstrated the effect of childhood adversity and the risk of suicide amongst youth. Increased behaviours amongst young people were found to be influenced by; physical, emotional, sexual abuse and neglect, family discord and violence. Mental health factors in youth also a strong indicator for suicidal tendencies (Beautrais, 2006)

Implications on Nursing practice:

Suicide amongst Maori youth is a serious issue in New Zealand (Mcdougall, 2013). As a future nurse not only is it important to acknowledge the health disparity between Maori and non-Maori but it is important to actively practise in a way that actively reduces these disparities. Baxter (2006), noted that there is no single causative factor for suicide.

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Fergusson, D. M. (1995). Childhood circumstances, adolescent adjustment and suicide in a New Zealand birth cohort. *Journal of American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 34.

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Rationale

Identifying causative factors that lead to high suicide rates amongst Maori youth aged between 15-24 and addressing them is important in reducing the disparities between Maori and non- Maori. Although we cannot change the past we can acknowledge our history and reflect upon it and hence create opportunities that allow for the reduction in disparities in a contemporary setting. There is a need to provide evidence-based research to provide culturally safe strategies for Maori suicide prevention. This will enable policies to be developed to address the importance of the Treaty of Waitangi principles and prevent violation of these principles. For, as long as the suicide rate amongst Maori youth remains high and the disparities amongst Maori and non-Maori exist, New Zealand will be in violation of the very treaty that united Maori and Pakeha as a country.

PECOT Category	Information relating to your question	Explanation
Population	Maori Youth aged between 15-24 living in New Zealand	The Ministry of Health (2015) states that Maori youth are 1.8 times more likely to commit suicide compared to non-Maori
Exposure	Risk factors for suicide i.e. mental illness, low educational and socioeconomic status. Cultural alienation, intergenerational behaviours and historical	These factors increase the risk of suicide amongst Maori
Comparison	Non-Maori living in New Zealand	This allows the reader to clearly identify the disparities between Maori and non-Maori
Outcome	Reduce the disparity between non Maori and Maori by promoting awareness and reducing risk factors for Maori youth.	Reducing the disparities between Maori and non-Maori will allow New Zealand to progress toward equitable health amongst all citizens.
Timeframe	N/A	