

Māori Culture and Mental Health

Review question using PICOT (Whitehead, 2013): “How does a lack of cultural connectedness or identity impact on Māori mental health?”

Introduction

Within New Zealand Māori are overrepresented in all health inequalities which has resulted in the development of national and regional plans that focus on improving health outcomes for Māori (Ministry of Health, 2014; Robson & Harris, 2007). One identified key area of need is mental health. Māori experience the poorest mental health status of all ethnic groups in New Zealand (Baxter, Kingi, Tapsell & Durie, 2006).

Facts

Te Rau Hinengaro, a mental health survey (Baxter et al, 2006) found that:

- One in two Māori experienced a mental health disorder at least once in their lifetime.
- Young Māori aged 16-24 years of age suffered from the burden of mental health disorders, with one in three having suffered for a 12 month period.
- Of all ethnic groups Māori were the least likely to use health services for mental health reasons.

Recommendations

1. I recommend that in a clinical setting, health professionals actions should help to develop increased cultural identity and allow for access to resources for Māori patients. These resources being Māori language, whānau networks and Māori lands (Durie, 1999).
2. The Māori culture is a collectivistic one. Cultural identity has been shown to interact with collectivism resulting in lower mental health issues for Maori. Encouraging the development of whānau, hapu and iwi (tribe) relations will aid to develop collectivism in patients.
3. Kaumatua are experts in Māori culture and processes and hold value cultural knowledge. As such I recommend that kaumatua as experts in cultural processes be involved in the cultural identification process of Māori mental health patients. I recommend that kaumatua work in partnership with Māori mental health workers to help plan and facilitate activities that will increase patient cultural identity.

Literature

1. Māori cultural identity and its implications for mental health services (Durie, 1997):

Within this article the author explores the importance of encouraging Māori cultural identity in within mental health services. Within a mental health setting, a holistic approach towards patient care is warranted for the achievement of best outcomes. For Māori in particularly this includes the development of one's cultural identity. The author concludes that for mental health patients who identify as Māori, every opportunity should be taken to reinforce Māori values and beliefs to help achieve optimum mental health outcomes.

2. Mental health and Māori development (Durie, 1999):

The article focused on means of improving mental health service delivery for Māori patients. The best health for Māori is sure when secure cultural identity is coupled with access to Māori culture and resources. One of the key strategies identified to improve the status of Māori mental health is fostering the development of a secure identity. This identity stems from the individual's access to social, economic and cultural resources. Cultural resources include the Māori language, whānau networks and Māori lands. The author states that these three cultural resources underlie one's cultural identity and helps to encourage positive mental health.

3. Collectivism, cultural identity and employee mental health: A study of New Zealand Māori (Brougham & Haar, 2012):

This is an analytical study examining the combinatory effect that collectivism and cultural identity have on the mental health of Māori employees. Collectivism can be defined as having a collective identity of being a part of a group, hence actions for example to attain potential resources are for the good of the group. Māori are considered to be a collectivistic society as they place significant value on whānau, whanaungatanga (social relationships) and whakapapa (ancestry). The findings of this study was consistent with previous research concerning the value of cultural identity to Māori wellbeing. Overall Māori who have a secure cultural identity tend to report low mental health problems

References

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Rationale

There is an intricate link between cultural connectedness and well-being in the Māori culture. As such, key aspects of the Māori culture should be utilised to provide cultural, effective and safe care for Māori individuals suffering from mental health issues (Kidd, Butler & Harris, 2014). For my literature review I choose to focus on how the lack of cultural identity, for Māori, can have an impact on their mental health. For this assignment I have chosen to present this information in a poster. My rationale for choosing a poster is that it is easily visible and accessed by the public (Tolliday, 2015). It is also a simple way of knowledge transfer which can increase public awareness since posters are usually situated in a public areas. This is my main reason for choosing to present my chosen topic in a poster.

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PICOT Category	Information relating to question	Explanation (Why)
Population	Those who have mental illness and who identify as being of Māori descent.	The question being used is specifically focussing on Māori with mental health issues.
Intervention/ Exposure	Māori who have low or no cultural identity and the impact this has on their mental health.	I will be looking for articles that specifically focus on the importance of cultural identity to Māori and how this can have a positive impact on their mental health.
Comparison/ Control	Māori who have a strong cultural identity.	I am interested in how reconnection with one's cultural identity could benefit Māori with mental health illnesses.
Outcome	Resolution of mental health illness through reconnection to cultural identity.	I want to understand how important cultural identity is in Māori and their recovery from mental illness/s.
Time	NA	

References

Tolliday, D. (2015). *The Advantages of Posters*. Retrieved from <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/advantages-posters-63269.html>

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