



Population futures in an uncertain world

The changing faces of Aotearoa New Zealand

Critical Issues for Population in Aotearoa

Ethnic inequities in population health

Elana Curtis

**Associate Professor – Medical, Taikura Consultants Ltd, Te Kupenga Hauora Māori, University of
Auckland**

30th August 2023, UoA

Māori Inequities in Population Health

- In any dimension measured, the health system has failed to achieve equity for Māori.
- Despite being embedded in legislation, policy and service planning, equity is often a tick box or aspirational objective and is not well linked to concrete actions, levers or consequences.
- Whole system responsibility

Key challenges

- Poor quality ethnicity data collection (despite protocols for ~20yrs)
 - 1:5 Māori (21%) were not identified as Māori on the NHI when compared to self-identified ethnicity recorded on the Census (Harris et al. 2022, Cleary 2021).
 - The quality of ethnicity data is consistently worse for Māori males than Māori females, and is particularly poor for those ages 20-24 years, where NHI misses 30%, or almost one in three Māori (Harris et al. 2022).
- Poor quality ethnicity data analysis
 - Promotion of Total Response ethnicity leading to overlapping comparator groups.
 - 54% of the total Māori population also identify with another ethnic group in addition to Māori (StatsNZ 2018).
 - Promotion of problematic denominators (e.g. HSU)
 - miss any Māori who have not accessed health services the last 3 years (selection bias), cannot be used for time-series analyses, relies on NHI ethnicity (misclassification bias)
- Threats to time-series analyses
 - Stats NZ review of standard/ethnicity question

Principles

- Māori have the right to be counted (and therefore valued).
- Māori have the right to monitor the Crown.
- Māori have Indigenous rights as tangata whenua to be a priority within ethnicity data analyses.
- Māori rights to mana motuhake (self-determination) require Indigenous Data Sovereignty principles to be upheld.
- The Crown requires high quality ethnicity data and analyses for Māori to uphold its obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
- Values and positioning affect ethnicity data collection and analysis and should be framed to support equity and Māori Indigenous rights.