GUEST EDITORIAL: **Zoë Tipa**

The significance of kaupapa Māori research methodology

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Kaupapa Māori research methodology situates Māori belief systems, protocols and worldviews above other research philosophies (Hiha, 2016). It emerged in the 1990s in the nation-wide movement to revitalise Māori culture and was supported by an increasing commitment to enhancing the partnership between Māori and the Crown (Powick, 2003). Many Māori were frustrated with their involvement in research conducted by Pākehā, and the methodologies used were often inappropriate or unacceptable for Māori research participants (Powick, 2003; Walker, Eketone & Gibbs, 2006). Kaupapa Māori research challenged the dominant cultural approaches to conducting research with Māori, and reinforced the need to protect and legitimise mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) within research processes (Cram, 2001; Smith, 2012). Attempts to define kaupapa Māori research have been fraught, as doing so requires compartmentalisation into structures that are not informed by Māori worldviews, therefore contradicting the emancipatory intent of the methodology (Smith, 2012; Walker et al, 2006).

Improving Māori health outcomes

An important premise of kaupapa Māori research methodology is that the intention of the research must lie in improving Māori health outcomes (Smith, 1999). Cram (2006) discussed the important role of kaupapa Māori researchers – firstly in terms of reaffirming Māori identity and self-belief, and secondly, in relation to critiquing non-Māori (and colonial) constructs of Māori realities. Pihama, Smith, Taki and Lee (2004) describe kaupapa Māori research approaches as supporting the transition required for Māori tikanga and reo to be viewed as the "norm", rather than the "other". They acknowledge this is a challenge within many "mainstream" institutions, however suggest there are increasing opportunities to embed kaupapa Māori approaches in a variety of research contexts to promote tino rangatiratanga (self-determination).

Te Ara Tika: Guidelines for Māori research ethics (Hudson, Milne, Reynolds, Russell & Smith, 2010) differentiate between kaupapa Māori research, Māori-centred research and mainstream research. Kaupapa Māori indicates an approach that is underpinned by te ao Māori (the Māori world). It is guided by tikanga (protocols) that can be linked to historical pūrākau (Māori creation narratives) and requires Māori design, delivery and participation in the research process. Māori-centred research involves the establishment and maintenance of partnerships with Māori communities. It calls for Māori involvement in roles to allow for adequate and credible representation of Māori perspectives as the research progresses. The minimum requirements in mainstream research relate to upholding the rights and protecting the interests of Māori, as well as considering the relationship of the research with Māori goals and aspirations.

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Given the differences between these three approaches to research in Aotearoa, it is important that research projects correctly identify the methodology and do not assume that any research involving Māori is "kaupapa Māori" methodology by default. Kaupapa Māori research requires Māori input into the design and development of the research to be evident throughout the research process. It is not enough to consider Māori "perspectives", as this indicates an overlay of Māori worldviews against dominant cultural norms (Ramsden, 2002), and would sit more accurately within a Māori-centred research design. Kaupapa Māori research requires authentic involvement and consultation with Māori stakeholders throughout the research process – including the development of the research question, the aims and the proposed outcomes.

The link between kaupapa Māori research and the intention of cultural safety is worth exploring. Ramsden (2002) defined cultural safety as a *"mechanism which allows the consumer to say whether or not our service is safe for them to approach and use"* (p.181).

> **Kaupapa Māori research is about reinforcing and validating Māori identity and worldviews.**

Kaupapa Māori research provides a vehicle to ensure that research experiences for Māori are culturally safe. This is not about referring to a checklist of cultural norms or processes, but rather ensuring that all stages of the research are informed and placed within Māori contexts and worldviews. Kaupapa Māori research is about reinforcing and validating Māori identity and worldviews (Cram, 2006). Despite this, there continues to be a tension between externally-generated ideas that "otherise" Māori and the lived reality of being Māori (Smith, 2012). In establishing research environments where Māori worldviews are privileged, researchers can challenge the dominant cultural discourse, create opportunities for meaningful involvement and increase the reliability of outcomes.

Shifting power to the minority culture

Central to the establishment of cultural safety is the concept of power. Cultural safety requires a power shift from the dominant culture to the minority culture. This shift is facilitated by creating opportunities for feedback and change within practice and systems. Likewise, kaupapa Māori research is fundamentally about reclaiming tino rangatiratanga for Māori; this is considered within a broader context of social justice, with a primary aim of addressing oppression

(Smith, 2012). Understanding the intent of kaupapa Māori research in nursing can be supported by making the connection with the concept of cultural safety and recognising the impact of cultural dominance in a research environment.

Kaupapa Māori research is driven by Māori needs, conducted by Māori and negotiated by Māori communities. It favours collective ownership of the research process over individual ownership. It positions the research as part of te ao Māori, rather than this being a token consideration. The connection with cultural safety allows for increased understanding of the rationale of kaupapa Māori methodology throughout the nursing profession. Kaupapa Māori research is not about following a specific formula, but creating research environments that optimise the responsiveness to Māori. Nurses can support kaupapa Māori research by raising the understanding and awareness of this methodology, which will help challenge the power of the dominant culture in the way research is conducted and enhance the credibility of research outcomes.

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