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Hua Oranga - Measuring Cultural Outcomes In Mental Health.

Abstract

Mental health issues continue to pose a significant threat to Māori health and Māori advancement. Over the past 30 years Māori admissions to psychiatric facilities have increased dramatically, and have coincided with Māori social and economic disadvantage. One approach to addressing these issues has been the development of Māori specific (kaupapa Māori) mental health services - treatment facilities which operate from within a Māori cultural paradigm. Anecdotally the success of these services is well considered. However, questions remain as to the appropriateness of current measurement tools and whether or not existing measures of outcome are able to fully appreciate the outcomes promoted and produced by these services. Others have further questioned the scope of outcome measures and their ability to adequately consider the outcomes desired by Māori users of mental health services (tangata whaiora).

In 1998, and in response to these types of concerns, researchers from Massey University (Palmerston North, New Zealand) were asked to construct a Māori measure of mental health outcome; a tool appropriate for routine clinical use which would measure outcomes of importance to Māori. This presentation details the development of this measure 'Hua Oranga' as well as the fundamental criteria upon which it is based. It considers the theoretical, technical and philosophical position of the measure, the challenges faced, the solutions identified and the opportunities presented. The measure strengthens the argument that measures of health outcome need not exclude a cultural dimension, and that for increased utility and consumer relevance an assessment of cultural issues must take place.

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