

AUT PARAMEDICINE RESEARCH DAY 2025



Experiences of tūroro Māori and their whānau when transported outside their local area after a cardiac emergency

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INTRODUCTION

In New Zealand, a complex colonial history resulted in a significant decrease in Māori population and the appropriation of Māori power, resources, and wealth.

The flow on effects include lack of access, distrust from previous experiences, untimely diagnosis combined with longer wait times, inequitable treatment options, individual biases, and systemic biases.

This research looks at the experiences of whānau who have experienced a cardiac event in the community.

AIM

When experiencing an acute cardiac event, tūroro (patients) are often transported to a hospital with specialist cardiac services. This can be far from their home.

This study explored tūroro Māori and whānau experiences and perceptions of being transported away from their community after an acute cardiac event.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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RESULTS

Tūroro and whānau described both positive and negative experiences.

There was one overarching theme – accessing care in an unfamiliar environment, and two sub-themes – whānau support and mana-enhancing communication (a holistic view ensuring the tūroro/whānau retain their power and decision making with all communication.)

Receiving care in an unfamiliar environment presented additional challenges for tūroro and whānau. It is important for whānau to be present at the hospital, despite the travel and the financial burden.

Theme/Subtheme	Explanation	Example/Quote
Accessing care in an unfamiliar environment: Process of being transferred to out-of-area hospital overwhelming.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Very different processes from smaller local or rural hospitalsProcess can be overwhelming and not always perceived as beneficial. It often comes with confusion and focus on illness not wellness.	“That’s only the second or third hospital visit I’ve had – the first in [big city]. I didn’t know what goes on in [major cardiac centre]. It would have actually been nice to have been told some of these things.”
Whānau support: Navigating unknown environments was particularly stressful for whānau members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Travel and financial burden means less and limited whānau support. Even with support there is difficulty in accessing support services e.g. accommodation especially for larger whānau, hours of operation versus when whānau arrive.	“What happened was she told me what their service was. My family could have got accommodation through them, but nobody told us that until three days before my leaving.”
Mana-enhancing communication: When a whānau is under stress, in an unfamiliar environment, mana-enhancing communication is vital.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Importance of respecting and integrating cultural values, beliefs and the need to uplift mana by speaking in language that is clear, concise, easy to understand and be inclusive of the whānau.	“I tell you what – they’ve got a team down in [major cardiac centre] that tells you everything around your procedure, your surgery, your defibrillator and everything else. They were really thorough. Very thorough. I understood them perfectly.”

METHOD

This is kaupapa Māori research, led by Māori researchers.

Five semi-structured interviews and two focus groups were undertaken with tūroro Māori and/or whānau members.

A general inductive approach was used in the analysis.

CONCLUSIONS

Receiving care in an unfamiliar environment presents challenges for tūroro and whānau who are transported away from home following a serious cardiac event.

There is uncertainty for the tūroro and, although whānau support is vital, the need to travel adds an additional burden for whānau. Many of the difficulties inherent in this situation can be eased with mana-enhancing communication.

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