

Māori Health Review™

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Ethnic inequalities in incidence, survival and mortality from abdominal aortic aneurysm in New Zealand

Authors: Sandiford P et al

Summary: This retrospective analysis quantified ethnic differences in incidence, survival and mortality from abdominal aortic aneurysm in New Zealand from 1996 to 2007. Māori were 8.3 years younger at first admission than European/other ethnicities (non-Māori, non-Pacific, non-Asian). Mortality rates were higher in Māori with a relative risk of 1.30 (95% CI 1.06 to 1.60) for men and 2.66 (95% CI 2.13 to 3.31) for women. One-year cumulative relative survival was significantly lower in Māori than European/other ethnicities for both men (60% vs 73%; $p < 0.0001$) and women (56% vs 67%; $p < 0.0001$). Māori were also much less likely to have their aneurysm repaired electively (39.6% vs 61.1%; $p < 0.00001$). The authors concluded that these ethnic inequalities provide 'additional support for screening on equity grounds.'

Comment: Ultrasound screening for abdominal aortic aneurysm has been shown to be effective at reducing mortality in randomised controlled trials; as a result some countries already offer population-based (i.e. male) screening programs. The higher incidence and mortality rates in Māori add an equity dimension to the development of a screening program in Aotearoa. However, further work is required to ensure adequate recruitment into such a program and to improve surgical outcomes for Māori women.

Reference: *J Epidemiol Community Health* 2012; Jul 5 [Epub ahead of print]
<http://jech.bmj.com/content/early/2012/07/04/jech-2011-200754.abstract>

Independent commentary by Dr Matire Harwood

Dr Matire Harwood (Ngapuhi) has worked in Hauora Māori, primary health and rehabilitation settings as clinician and researcher since graduating from Auckland Medical School in 1994. She also holds positions on a number of boards, committees and advisory groups including the Health Research Council. Matire lives in Auckland with her whānau including partner Haunui and two young children Te Rangiuira and Waimarie.

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