

# Māori Health Review™



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## Support needs of families living with children with autism spectrum disorder

**Authors:** Searing BM et al.

**Summary:** The aim of this investigation was to determine how caregivers of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in New Zealand perceive the availability and helpfulness of supports used, with a particular focus on caregivers who are Māori, and who live rurally. The study recruited 92 caregivers, all of whom completed the Family Support Scale (a widely used screening tool that details a client's social networks; Hanley et al., 1998). Free text comments were invited. More support was perceived as available by non-Māori than Māori. Spouses were rated as the most helpful support. Professional helpers were rated as 'somewhat helpful'. Helpful support emphasised caring, knowledge and accessibility.

**Comment:** A number of whānau have described the difficulties and challenges experienced when accessing services to help with the diagnosis, and management, of ASD for their tamariki. Importantly, this research builds on previous work undertaken with Māori living with ASD to focus on the impacts on, and needs of, whānau.

**Reference:** *J Autism Dev Disord.* 2015;45(11):3693-702

[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 Rangiura and Waimarie.

Research Review publications are intended for New Zealand health professionals.

**Disclaimer:** This publication is not intended as a replacement for regular medical education but to assist in the process. The reviews are a summarised interpretation of the published study and reflect the opinion of the writer rather than those of the research group or scientific journal. It is suggested readers review the full trial data before forming a final conclusion on its merits.

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## TATAU KAHUKURA: MĀORI HEALTH CHART BOOK 2015 (3RD EDITION)

The Ministry of Health released *Tatau Kahukura: Māori Health Chart Book 2015 (3rd Edition)* on 9th October. The chart book provides a snapshot of Māori health in the early 2010s. This chart book, like previous editions, presents key indicators relating to the socioeconomic determinants of health, risk and protective factors for health, health status, health service use and the health system. The most recent data available for each indicator was used. The indicators align to those used in more general annual monitoring at a national level.

The chart book shows that Māori have higher rates than non-Māori for many health conditions and chronic diseases, including cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and asthma. Māori also experience higher disability rates.

The Ministry intends to continue to update this profile of Māori health regularly (every three to five years).



Hard copies of the chart book can be ordered from the Ministry website [www.health.govt.nz](http://www.health.govt.nz).

The publication is also available to download with the full suite of data tables.

For more information, please go to <http://www.maorihealth.govt.nz>