Achieving equitable outcomes for Māori women with cervical cancer in New Zealand: health provider views

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Summary: This paper presents an analysis of key themes identified from transcripts of focus groups undertaken with three health provider groups in different regions of New Zealand working across the range of cervical cancer services. The focus groups sought to uncover health provider views on changing survival disparities between Māori and non-Māori women, the management of cervical cancer in New Zealand, and achieving equitable outcomes from cervical cancer for Māori women. Providers were encouraged by improvements over time in survival disparities between Māori and non-Māori. Key themes of discussion relating to cervical cancer management included: communication and education; screening; access to treatment; pathways through care; patient factors; and system standards. Providers suggested options for further improvements in the management of cervical cancer to achieve equitable outcomes for Māori, particularly in the areas of prevention and early detection.

Comment: Data confirms the disparities in cervical screening rates between Māori, Pacifica and women living in deprived neighbourhoods compared with ‘Others’. The options provided here to improve management, including screening, of cervical cancer, are particularly useful to someone like me working in primary care.


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.