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Research Theme

Mental Health

In this issue

1. Introduction
2. Ministry of Health Primary Mental Health Work Programme Profiled
3. Project Profile: The Significance of Culture in Indigenous Mental Health
4. Portrait of Health: the New Zealand Health Survey
5. 2008 New Zealand Health Innovation Awards Finalists
6. Recent publications by New Zealand researchers
7. Next DHBRF e-newsletter
8. About DHBRF e-newsletter
9. Subscribe/unsubscribe
10. Contact us

1. Introduction:

In 2006 the first national survey of mental health in the New Zealand population was published by the Ministry of Health. This study showed that 47% of New Zealanders will experience a mental illness and/or an addiction at some time in their lives, with one in five people affected within one year. New Zealand has particularly high prevalence of anxiety, mood and substance abuse disorders. The prevalences are higher for Maori and Pacific people than for other composite ethnic groups, and comorbidity is common.



Mental Health was identified as a priority research area by the DHBRF Governance Group and a Request for Proposals was released last year with a focus on the integration of mental health care within a primary care setting. Applications are currently under assessment. More information can be found [here](#).

In this issue of the DHBRF e-news the Mental Health Policy and Service Development team from the Population Health Directorate at the Ministry of Health profile their current primary mental health work programme, including a series of initiatives working with PHOs to identify mental health issues at the primary care level, as well as development of the primary mental health workforce and innovative e-projects.

A recently funded HRC post-doctoral fellowship in the area of mental health will enable Dr Lynne Pere to investigate the influence of culture on the meanings that indigenous peoples who have experienced mental illness impart to their illness. Dr Pere's research is profiled in this issue. The launch of the New Zealand Health Survey "Portrait of Health" is also

described. Finally, we also include references to peer-reviewed journal articles published by HRC funded researchers in the area of mental health.

Next month's DHBRF e-news will focus on the topic of access to services. Please email us at DHBWorkshop@hrc.govt.nz if you have any contributions on this topic that may be of interest to newsletter readers.

2. Ministry of Health Primary Mental Health Work Programme Profiled:

The Mental Health Group at the Population Health Directorate provides policy advice to the Minister of Health. It is responsible for implementation of government policy through collaborative efforts with District Health Boards, and for the administration of mental health legislation. The Group also provides advice to Government on, and administration of, the legislative environment in which mental health services operate and which affects people with experience of mental illness and addiction and their whānau, friends and communities. Its work seeks to ensure protection of both human rights and safety of individuals and communities, and to achieve balance where different rights appear to be in conflict.



With research from New Zealand and internationally suggesting that about a third of people who consult primary care practitioners have a mental health problem or illness at the time of the consultation, or have experienced a mental health problem in the past year, the Ministry of Health seeks to respond to these issues by working to build and strengthen the capability of the primary health care sector to promote mental health and wellbeing and to respond to the needs of people with mental illness and addiction.

A summary of the focus of the Ministry of Health's current primary mental health work programmes can be downloaded [here](#).

3. Project Profile: The Significance of Culture in Indigenous Mental Health:

Maori experiences of mental illness and the meanings imparted by Tangata Whai Ora (Maori mental health consumers) to these experiences will form the basis of a new HRC-funded Maori Postdoctoral Fellowship. Dr Lynne Pere from the Health Services Research Centre at Victoria University of Wellington plans to investigate the influence of culture on the meanings that indigenous peoples from New Zealand, Australia and Canada, who have experienced mental illness, impart to their illness.



"The importance of culture is well recognised in mental health policy in New Zealand. This research takes it a bit further – this is understanding cultural influence from a Tangata Whai Ora perspective," Dr Pere says.

Download the [March 2008 issue of Panui](#) to read the full article.

4. Portrait of Health: the New Zealand Health Survey

The New Zealand Health Survey "Portrait of Health" was launched at parliament on 15 May. The publication contains important information on health behaviours, health status and health service utilization. In the weeks leading up to the launch you may have seen prereleases on diabetes, primary health care and smoking.

Please contact Allison Sutherland for further details if you need them, she will be able to

pass you onto the appropriate people. Allison_sutherland@moh.govt.nz or 04 816 4378

5. 2008 New Zealand Health Innovation Awards Finalists:

The finalists in the 2008 New Zealand Health Innovation Awards were recently announced. Maori and Pacific peoples, people with emphysema, and spinal cord injury patients are among those benefiting from clever thinking by the 20 Health Innovation Awards finalists. These awards recognise individuals and organisations developing new and innovative approaches to delivering better health services.



Download the full press release [here](#). Visit the [HIA website](#)

for further information.

6. Recent publications by New Zealand researchers:

New Zealand has an excellent track record in producing research results for presentation in international journals. Mental Health research covers the translational level with interaction at the clinic as well as more fundamental research on the bench.

Download [here](#) a list of selected references published in the last year by HRC funded researchers, relevant to DHB core business.

Download [here](#) a selection of HRC funded projects on the topic of mental health.

7. Next DHBRF e-newsletter:

The next eNewsletter will be due on June 2008 and based on the theme Access to Services. If you have a proposed newsletter item relevant to this theme please email DHBWorkshop@hrc.govt.nz

8. About the purpose of the DHBRF e-newsletter:

- Provide DHBs with information relevant to DHB core business i.e. funding and planning activities
- Identify research that could inform planning for public health services
- Identify less relevant research which may have more of a biomedical focus
- Monthly communications focus on one of the priority population health goals as outlined in the New Zealand Health Strategy
- Information is taken from an annual HRC report identifying publications produced by New Zealand research teams or funded by the HRC between May 2005 – June 2006

Information included represents highlights of findings of high-quality research, readily available at the time of writing

9. Subscribe/unsubscribe

To subscribe or unsubscribe, send an e-mail containing your title, name, job title, organisation, mailing address, phone and fax number, with the subject line "Subscribe DHB eNewsletter" or "Unsubscribe DHB eNewsletter" to jlawson@hrc.govt.nz.

10. Contact Us:

To contact us telephone Aroha Haggie at the HRC on (09) 303 5207 or email: ahaggie@hrc.govt.nz



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