

MĀ TE WAI
KA PIKI AKE TE HAUORA

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ABSTRACT

This paper researched traditional Māori forms of music therapy focusing on *waiata*¹ and *taonga pūoro*². Linking cultures: collaborative partnerships in music therapy and related disciplines is the main objective of this research. In support, this paper examined past and current Māori practices that aim to heal and promote ‘well-being’ amongst people, thus resulting in linking the Māori culture and therapeutic values and practices in contemporary New Zealand

The title of this paper is **Mā Te Wai - Ka Piki Ake Te Hauora**, literally translates as through water, music and spiritual connection brings about human ‘well being’. The Māori word ‘wai’ has three separate meanings in this title. First, *wai Māori* being fresh water, an important necessity and *rongoa*³ in everyday life. Second, *waiata* (and *pūoro*⁴), being song and music as a Māori therapeutic practice. Third, *wairua*, the spiritual connection between the spiritual realm and human physical being for healing. All three aspects will be examined further to give an understanding of traditional practices used in ancient times, and current practices that employs *waiata* and *taonga pūoro* as a traditional means of healing in contemporary times.

Keywords: hauora, waiata, taonga pūoro, rongoa.

1. INTRODUCTION

In Māori cosmology, the Māori originates from Io and the gods, and it was the gods that created the world and the physical human being. According to Tiramorehu (1849):

Kei te pō te timatatanga o te waiatatanga mai a te atua.

Ko te ao, ko te ao mārama, ko te ao tūroa.

¹ *Waiata*: Māori song from traditional to contemporary forms.

² *Taonga pūoro*: traditional Māori instruments.

³ *Rongoa*: traditional Māori medicine.

⁴ *Pūoro*: music

Translated, it was in the night that the gods sang the world into existence from darkness, into the world of light that created a world of music.

The creation of the world and all its inhabitants possess a special power gifted by Io, the supreme god, the power of *mauri*. According to Barlow (1991, p. 83) “*everything has a mauri, including people, fish, animals, birds, forests, land, seas, and rivers; the mauri is that power which permits these living things to exist within their own realm and sphere.*”

Therefore, the Māori was very connected to the gods, the universe, the earth and all its inhabitants through the power of *mauri*. Hence, the spoken words of Tānemahuta who created the first human being Hineahuone, “**Tihei Mauri-ora.**”⁵ In reference to this particular research the main focus is on *hauora* or ‘well-being’ that is embodied within the *mauri* of the human being.

Mention must be made about the importance of *hauora* within the *whānau*⁶, *hapū*⁷ and *iwi*⁸. As this important proverb states:

He aha te mea nui o te ao? He tangata, he tangata, he tangata.

Translated, what is the most important thing in the world? It is people, the people, the human race.

Therefore, the Māori was very concerned about the state of its people whether it be populating the tribe, survival or ensuring *hauora*, as life itself was pertinent to the survival and functioning of the tribe.

In the Māori world there were many remedies and therapeutic practices to ensure the *hauora* of the people were maintained. Although many of these practices are replaced by Western traditions, some of these ancient practices still continue today. These traditional practices include:

- Karakia: Māori rituals for healing the sick. Linking the person to the gods.
- Rongoa: traditional medicine from the natural environment.

⁵ *Tihei Mauri-ora*: the sneeze of life, let there be life.

⁶ *Whānau*: family.

⁷ *Hapū*: sub-tribe, the clan.

⁸ *Iwi*: the main tribe, the nation.

- Mirimiri, Koo Miri, Tā Miri, and Romiromi: traditional practices of massaging and healing the body.
- Waiata: traditional songs for healing purposes.
- Taonga pūoro: traditional Māori instruments for sound healing.

Although, these traditional practices can be performed individually in some particular cases, but in others there may be a need to combine some or all practices, depending on the treatment or the person being treated.

Finally, the important role of the *tohunga*⁹ who performs the *karakia*, prepares the *rongoa*, sings the *waiata*, performs *mirimiri*, or plays *taonga pūoro*. According to Robinson (2005, p. 10), “*the tohunga is a spiritual person of great power and may be called the priest of Māori society*”.

Although I agree that the *tohunga* is a spiritual person, and to the Māori very *tapu*¹⁰, the word priest denotes Western belief system and a Christian denomination that differs from the Māori belief system. For the purpose of this paper, the *tohunga-rongoa* refers to a healer, a spiritual leader, a knowledgeable scholar in ancient folklore, the mediator between the spiritual and physical worlds, and the caretaker of ancient practices.

The practices of the Māori *tohunga* was halted by the introduction of the Tohunga Suppression Act 1907 aimed to replace tohunga as traditional Māori healers with "modern" medicine. This had severe impact on Māori society during colonisation where traditional practices were outlawed, however continued behind closed doors. The effect of such a law impacted on the decline of tohunga, the lost of traditional knowledge and denying Māori indigenous rights to practice *mātauranga* Māori - Māori knowledge, that have been practiced for years. Western medicine and the doctor replaced the *tohunga*.

⁹ *Tohunga*: literal translation is ‘an expert.’ In Māori society there were many tohunga who had special roles. This research focuses on tohunga-rongoa, a healer.

⁸*Tapu*: sacred, powerful.

2. MAURI

As mentioned before all living creatures including the human being possess *mauri* from Io, the supreme god. This notion that living organisms possess unique quality, a *élan vital*, that gives them that special quality we call life. As Victor Stenger (1999) writes:

*Belief in the existence of a living force is ancient and remains widespread to this day. Called **prana** by the Hindus, **qi** or **chi** by the Chinese, **ki** by the Japanese, and 95 other names in 95 other countries, this substance is said to constitute the source of life that is often associated with the soul, spirit and mind.*

In *hauora*, the *mauri* plays an important part of the birth, death and the healing of the human being. According to Barlow (1991, p. 83), “*when a person is born, the gods bind the two parts of body and spirit of his being together. Only the mauri or power of Io can join them together*”.

Furthermore, the *manawa* - heart provides the breath of life, but the *mauri* has the power to bind or join together both spiritual and physical beings resulting in life. In death, the *mauri* is no longer able to bind those parts together, and thereby give life - and the physical and spiritual parts of a person's being is separated (Barlow, 1991, p. 83).

In the process of sustaining *hauora*, the *tohunga* being the mediator between the god Io and the physical being of the person, focuses on both *manawa* and *mauri* to restore health. The healing of the sick requires *mauri* to connect the person to God and the spiritual realm for spiritual intervention, and the *manawa*, or the human body to respond to traditional practices such as *karakia*, *rongoa*, *mirimiri*, *waiata* and *taonga pūoro* as tools for healing.

In healing, the *tohunga-rongoa* was knowledgeable in the make-up of the human body and how to heal. Robinson (2005, p. 215) mentions, “*understanding the workings of the soul and the body played a major role in diagnosing and healing patient*”.

Robinson (2005, p. 216) identifies the ‘body of man’ according to Eldon Best that differ from Poua Taare as shown below:

Meaning	Word by Best	Word by Taare
Soul	Hamano	Wairua
Breath	Manawa	Hau
Shadow	Ata	Ahua
Body	Kiko	Kiko

Figure 1 below shows two diagrams. The left diagram depicts the souls seated on the body of man. The right diagram illustrates that the souls envelope the body like veils, somewhat like the rings of an onion.

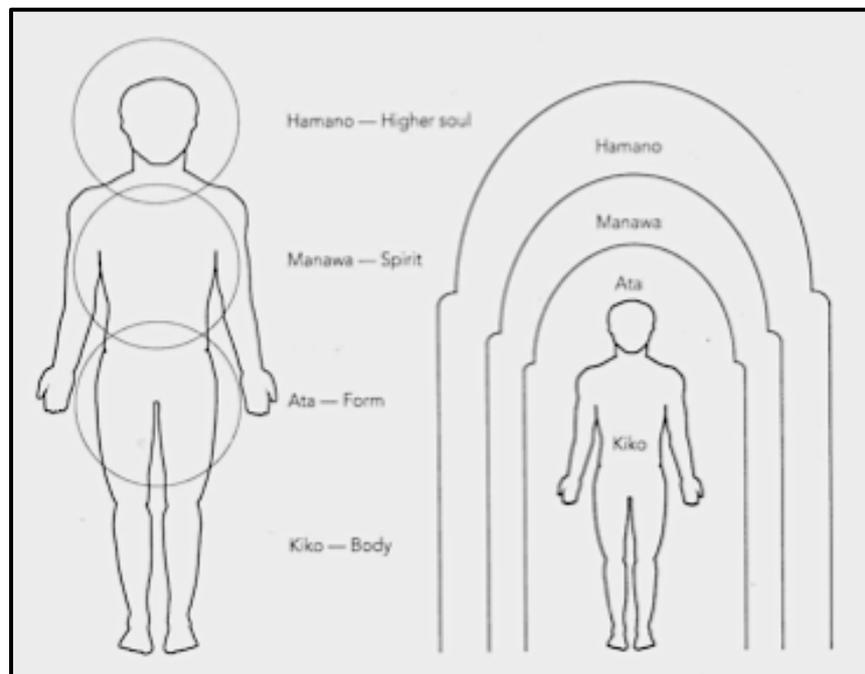


Figure 1 The soul of man (Robinson, 2005, p. 217)

In Māori health terms this is extended to:

- *Taha Hinengaro*: mental state
- *Taha Tinana*: the physical body
- *Taha Wairua/mauri*: the spiritual being
- *Manawa*: the heart, life source
- *Hā*: the breath, breathing
- *Hauora*: the breath of life, the 'wellbeing.'

The *mauri* (and *mana*¹¹) of a person is the main concern of the *tohunga rongoa* to restore health in times of sickness. Robinson (2005) explains the role of *tohunga rongoa* during healing:

The healing of the tohunga-rongoa can be seen as having two stages here. One is the opening of the channels to let mauri run its course, thus power, or life force, is able to heal. The second is the aka or vine, the blueprint by which the āhua¹² transforms this potential energy into correction vitality. How these two stages are brought into action is by karakia (p. 229).

3. WAIATA

As mentioned in the introduction, *wai māori* is important as water was not only seen as a commodity of life but also used in many cases as a *rongoa*, for its healing properties. I have given an account of the close relationship that Māori have with Io, the gods, the universe and earth, and that everything exists through the life binding element *mauri*. I would like to turn our attention to the traditional practices of *waiata* as important *tikanga*,¹³ and tools for healing.

Traditional *waiata* refer to different classifications of Māori chants that is part of the older form of Māori music as explained by Mclean (1965) and Ngata (2006):

The other kind of Māori music (Māori chant) has a long tradition dating back to the beginnings of the Māori people. Even today it remains associated with the old values and institutions of Māoridom. It exhibits, in consequence, great tenacity of style.

There are many classification and sub-classifications of *waiata*. Too many to mention. However, in light of the healing process, I would like to explain the importance of *karakia*, known as recited songs, usually performed by *tohunga*; *oriori* - lullabies; and *waiata hou* - contemporary songs for the purpose of healing.

Ancient *karakia* were known only by *tohunga* who perform certain rituals. This knowledge was never shared and kept secret to the *tohunga* and tribal folklore. Every tribe had their chosen *tohunga*

¹¹ *Mana*: power, authority, prestige. Mana is the enduring, indestructable power of the gods (Barlow, 1991, p. 61). Likened to mauri, everything has mana including the human being.

¹² *Āhua*: form, approaches, practices

¹³ *Tikanga*: customs, traditions, rituals

and a repertoire of *karakia* for use in all kinds of situations including healing. Every *karakia* is *tapu* in textform, function, and delivery as a mediation between the *tohunga*, the person being healed, Io, and the gods.

Here are two examples of *karakia* cited by Robinson (2005, pp. 235, 237). The first example is used when collecting the *miro* leaf and the *karakia* is an invocation of the life force essence to empower the healing plants into effectiveness; and the second example is used to heal a broken bone.

Example 1

E Miro taketake mai i Hawaiki¹⁴

Ka pū mai i Hawaiki

Ka weu mai i Hawaiki

Ka more mai i Hawaiki

Ka rito mai i Hawaiki

Ka aka mai i Hawaiki

Ka aka mai i Hawaiki

Ka tipu mai i Hawaiki

Ka pua mai i Hawaiki

Ka hua mai i Hawaiki

Hara mai aue tiki hua

Hai rongoa mō...

Hai oranga mō...

Oh great Miro that sprouted in Hawaiki

Grew tap root in Hawaiki

Grew secondary roots in Hawaiki

Grew rootlets in Hawaiki

Grew the shoot in Hawaiki

Branched in Hawaiki

Leafed in Hawaiki

¹⁴ *Hawaiki*: the name of the Māori homeland from whence they migrated across the Pacific Ocean and founded Aotearoa, New Zealand.

Blossomed in Hawaiki
Bore leafbuds in Hawaiki
I have come to get your leafbuds
For medicine for.....
For long life

Example 2

E Tiki e, hōmai te ruruku
Rukutia, taroia, tamaua
Toro te kiko. Arawa i o uaua
Tēnei hoki te tutaki ka mau

O Tiki, give here the binding
Draw together, tie up, hold fast
Stretch out the flesh. Fasten your sinews
Now the junction is made fast

From traditional *karakia* emerged Christian prayers that were administered by ministers or priests from different religions and/or *kaumatua*¹⁵. These specific prayers connected to the Christian god, *Ihowa*¹⁶ and *Ihu Karaiti*¹⁷. Here is a Christian prayer used in the Pai Mārire Faith of the Kīngitanga¹⁸. This particular prayer pays homage to the Kīngitanga, to Kīngi Tūheitia, the sick, and the people gathered at the morning service.

Pai Mārire Karakia

¹⁵ *Kaumatua*: Māori elders and leaders.

¹⁶ *Ihowa*: Jehovah, God almighty

¹⁷ *Ihu Karaiti*: Jesus Christ, the son of God.

¹⁸ *Kīngitanga*: Māori king movement.

Tō tiakinga māramatanga e te Atua
Ki tō mātou kīngi a Tūheitia
Ki ngā tinana e māuiui ana
Ki a mātou katoa i te ata nei
Nāu te korōria
Nāu te korōria
Nāu te korōria - a - a
Rire rire hau
Paimārire

*Oh god, bless and care
Towards our King Tūheitia
To the many that are stricken with illness
Towards us that are gathered together this morning
The glory is yours
The glory be to you
The glory is yours
Goodness and peace to one another*

The *oriori* were lullabies described here by Simmons (2003, p. 9):

Oriori or Pōpō are lullabies: sung on the birth of a chiefly child and afterwards recounting the deeds of his ancestors and the myths and history of the tribe.

Lullabies were important *rongoa*, not only to put the baby to sleep, but during illness, calming the baby so that the healing process can take its course. Whether the *oriori* was being sung by the mother, father or other kinfolk, it was important for the baby to connect to the human voice and the melody and rhythm of the song for calming affect and family reassurance. Furthermore, to educate the child, the *oriori* was a way to connect the child to personal genealogy, tribal affiliation, tribal history, myths & legends and important events. One could say, that the *oriori* played a dual role, healing and educating.

Here are two examples of *oriori*. The first example is a traditional song composed by Enoka Te Pakaru of Te Aitanga-ā-Mahaki tribe. In the lullaby there is mention of the coming of the kūmara,

sweet potato. I have provided the first verse of this very long *oriori*, which has 60 lines of lyrics altogether. The second song is a contemporary *waiata* that my mother sang to me during childhood.

Example 1

Pōpō

E tangi ana tama ki te kai māna
Waiho, me tiki ake ki te Pou-a-hao-kai
Hei ā mai te pakake ki uta rā
Hei waiū mō tama
Kia hōmai e tō tupuna e Uenuku
Whakarongo! Ko te kūmara ko Parinui-te-rā
Ka hikimata te tapuae o Tangaroa
Ka whaimata te tapuwae o Tangatorā
Tangaroa! Ka haruru!

Lullaby

*My son, Tama, is crying for food
Wait until it is fetched from the Pillars-of-netted food
And the whale is driven ashore
To give milk for you my son
Verily, your ancestor Uenuku will give freely
Now Listen. The kūmara is for the Beetling-Cliff-of-sun
Beyond the eager bounding strides of Tangaroa
Lo, striding to and fro is Tangaroa, god of the sea
Tangaroa! Listen to his resounding roar!*

Example 2

Moe mai pēpi
Kaua e tangi
Ka hoki mai a māmā
Apōpō

Sleep oh baby
Don't cry
Mother will return again
Tomorrow

As Māori music evolves, so to are the practices of composing *waiata hou* and increasing the repertoire of Māori *waiata*. Here are two examples of *waiata hou* - contemporary songs that can be used for healing, and to connect the patient to the gods and the natural elements of the environment, as part of the healing process. These *waiata* have been obtained from the DVD, He Oranga. He Oranga - Healing Journeys produced by WickCandle Film (2007).

Me Hiki

Aroha Yates Smith

Me hiki
Me hiki
Me hiki te whakaaro
Kia tau ai te mauri
I roto i ahau

Mauritau
Mauritau
Kia tau ai te mauri
I roto i ahau

Uplift
Uplift

*Let my thoughts be uplifted
To settle the mauri deep
Within me*

*Be calm
Calm the mauri
Calm and wellbeing
A sense of peace within me*

Kei Te Pari Tonu Mai I Te Tai

Aroha Yates Smith

Kei te pari tonu mai te tai
Kei te whiti tonu iho te rā
Kei te karetao o te moana
Au e miria ana e te wai

Te Wai, Te Wai

He wai tai piri mai
He rongoa whakaora
He rongoa whakaora
I tāku tinana
E okioki nei i te pohu
I te wai marino o Hinemoana

*The tide is still flowing
The sun still shines
Down upon me
And I am caressed
By the rippling surface
Of the sea*

The water, the water

The ocean water envelops me

A life giving salve

Healing my body

As I lie on the breast

Of the ocean

On the gentle waters of Hinemoana

4. TAONGA PŪORO

According to Dorothy Buchanan and Keri Kaa (2002), *taonga pūoro* were only found in museums rather than on the marae. These traditional Māori instruments lay silent in these museums until the 1980's and 1990's saw a great revival in these instruments by advocates such as Hirini Melbourne, Richard Nunns, Brian Flintoff and others. The revival focused on research, the making and playing of these instruments.

These instruments had multiple purposes in Māoridom. Here are examples of those particular functions:

- Toys and games - referring to the pūrrohū (pūrerehua), the bullroarer, McLean (1996, p. 75) writes, “in Polynesia, the bullroarer was used as a children’s toy and the same use is attributed by Willians to New Zealand.”
- Calling birds – the karanga manu or kōauau pūtangitangi are calling flutes. “The player is able to mimic several kinds of bird calls” to lure birds during hunting (Flintoff, 2004, p. 39)
- Warning people - the pūtātara and the pūkaea instruments were used to gather the people and in dangerous situations, to warn people. Best (2005, p. 288) writes about the pūtātara, “the noise is as rude as can well be imagined. These conches are sometimes used in war to collect a scattered party.” The pūkaea or sometimes refer to as a war trumpet, “They were

sounded by watchmen on duty at a fortified village or pā to signal the approach of an enemy or to show that the pā was on the alert (McLean, 1996, p. 181).

- To Evoke the gods - Best (2005, p. 294) writes about the huhū (another name for the bullroarer) was used to call on the gods to bring rain. He also writes, "He would go forth with a bullroarer and handful of ashes, throw the ashes toward the south (the rainy quarter) and commence to sound his huhu by swinging it round, at the same time turning his back on the south in an insulting manner, so that it would become angry and send a storm."
- Māori rituals - "In Taranaki, according to Purchas (1914, p. 231), bullroarers were called mamae and the whirling noise was used to dispense evil spirits at the lying in of a dead chief."
- Therapeutic benefits - the healing powers of the porotiti or humming discs were "used as an aid towards arthritis, to clear mucus from sinuses" (Flintoff, 2004, pp. 57 - 58).

For the purpose of this research, *taonga pūoro* were used as a 'healing tool,' as part of 'sound healing,' practice. Here is a description of a sound healing session by Robinson (2005):

Usually a consultation involves massage of certain points to open the channels of mauri through the body before treatment is given. Sound is then applied to the areas of the body that call for treatment to be used.

Sound applied in the form of various musical instruments and also deep chanting where the voice is made to resonate. With a specific problem, such as an injury, most of the attention is placed on that area. Sometimes the problem can be more an emotional than a physical one. If this is the case the tohunga uses hypnotherapy suggestion while doing the sound healing (p. 243.)

Figure 2 shows a list of *taonga pūoro* used for sound healing for various illnesses.

Taonga Pūoro	Illness	Application
<i>Kōhatu</i> - stones	Relieve pain in the back and joints	Stone is laid on the painful area, the tohunga taps the stone with hammer, to locate the injured area before treatment and massage (Robinson, 2005: 245).
<i>Porotiti</i> Whizzing disc	Clear sinuses Help arthritis Soothe rheumatism	Spinning the porotiti creates ultrasonic vibration. It may be spun over the chest of sleeping children suffering from colds, influenza and bronchitis (Robinson, 2005: 245 – 246).
<i>Kōauau</i> Māori flute	Heal broken bones Ease labour Promote growth of plants	Each style of playing demands respect and is used in different modes of healing (Robinson, 2005: 246, 248).
<i>Pūrerehua</i> <i>Bull roarer</i>	Migraines Arthritis Sinuses	Spinning the pūrerehua creates ultrasonic vibration for healing (Kōmene, 2012, personal communication)

Figure 2 Taonga pūoro ‘Sound healing’

5. PRACTICES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

This article reveals that traditional Māori practices in healing still exist today. Ancient knowledge about the use of *waiata* and *taonga pūoro* as healing tools has survived into the 21st century, whether in its original form or adapted to modern means. However, it is fair to state that some, if not, a vast amount of traditional knowledge has been lost due to the Tohunga Suppression Act 1907, and the introduction of Western alternative healing and medicine.

This particular topic has been researched, talked about, written about, revived and practiced to benefit the wellbeing of people. This supports that Māori value holistic healing practices and the passing down of information from one generation to the next. Not only has this practice been

beneficial to Māori, it has interacted with other health traditions and organisations throughout New Zealand especially in the area of *rongoa* - traditional medicines.

The integration and exchange of *rongoa* knowledge amongst Pākeha doctors has been ‘an eye opener’ as Cram, Smith and Johnstone¹⁹ (2003) reports from personal interviews with Māori patients:

Some of the participants talked about using both Māori and Pākeha medicines. These participants had often found Pākeha general practitioners to be very understanding of their use of rongoa, and some went to great lengths to impart knowledge to their doctor. In such cases, the interchange was usually with a doctor who took time to listen to a patient and was willing to acknowledge other forms of healing (although possibly because they see them as harmless).

Furthermore, other Māori healing practices have been active in marae settings, especially *mirimiri* amongst adults and elders alike. The Manu Aute Whare Oranga o Manurewa Marae Services provides three types of *mirimiri*: traditional ‘hands on’ massage, hot stones massage therapy, and restorative healing massage (reflexology, polarity healing, aromatherapy).

In reference to ‘sound healing’ the Raukatauri Music Therapy Centre in Auckland was opened in 2004 to provide music therapy for special needs children. It is New Zealand’s first music therapy centre instigated by singer and songwriter Hinewehi Mohi, her husband George and daughter Hineraukatauri. The centre works with vocals and assortment of musical instruments including *taonga pūoro* (*kōauau* and *pūtorino* - Māori flutes).

The traditions of *karakia* and *waiata* have been and still are an important part of Māori society. They are performed at many functions and different settings including the marae. Due to extensive research there has been some collection of *karakia* and *waiata* that serves the purpose of healing. It is important to note that the practice and delivery of *karakia* and sacred *waiata* are assigned to special people such as *tohunga* and *kaumatua* who are qualified and authorized to perform such traditions. After all, as Barlow (1991, p. 37) writes, “*the object of karakia is to find favour with the gods in all activities and pursuits (including healing)*”.

¹⁹ Reference: Cram, F. Smith, L., & Johnstone, W. (2003). Mapping the themes of Māori talk about health, The New Zealand Medical Journal, Vol 116 No 1170.

In conclusion, the revival of traditional Māori healing practices has led to the establishment of, Ngā Ringa Whakahaere o te Iwi Māori, a national board of Māori healers, in 1993. As Durie (1998) writes, “*this was a conscious move taken by healers and their followers to adopt a more public profile and seek recognition as part of the National Health Service*”. Although the board does not represent all healers, it advocates on behalf of affiliated members and for more formal recognition of traditional healing practices. The board has also been involved in formulating accreditation procedures for healers, and has contributed to the development of national traditional healing service standards (Durie, 1996; MoH, 1999).

6. CONCLUSION & FURTHER RESEARCH

This paper examined traditional and contemporary practices of ‘healing’ amongst Māori and within contemporary New Zealand. This paper has only touched the surface of such a diverse topic, and presented an introduction to Māori healing practices.

As Māori healing is about sustaining cultural knowledge and practices, and the environment, Māori healers are still subjected to pressures of globalization and western society ideals, and that these practices are still seen as an alternative to a more acceptable Western medical tradition. However, there is still value in traditional Māori medicine and healing practices that could be beneficial to New Zealand mainstream health services via careful consultation as Ahuriri-Driscoll, Hudson, Baker, Hepi, Mika, Tiakiwai (2008) suggests:

Transitioning for a ‘practice’ based approach to one of ‘service’ delivery requires careful negotiation of challenges in terms of changing relationships, expectations of quality, and maintenance of capacity.

This paper shares some *mātauranga* Māori (Māori epistemology), with the aim that further research and development of indigenous health knowledge, that informs traditional healing (like Māori), and in producing the type of evidence necessary to support the development of *rongoa* (medicine, cure) and traditional healing services within mainstream health systems.

I suggest that more research needs to focus on collecting *karakia* used for healing (depending on *tohunga* and *kaumatua* that wish to share such sacred knowledge) and learning the delivery of such *karakia*; a collection of traditional and contemporary *waiata* that can be used for healing purposes (and made available to practitioners); more information about *taonga pūoro* use in healing (and the playing of such instruments for different treatments); and a current directory of all services that provide Māori healing as part of their *hauora* service.

Mauri tū - Mauri ora

Mauri noho - Mauri mate

When one takes care of ones health, life prevails

When one neglects ones health, life diminishes

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