

The Effects of Racial Cohesion among White and Maori Populations on Healthcare in New Zealand

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Abstract : New Zealand has a small, yet racially diverse, population of only 4.6 million people, consisting of a majority European immigrant population and a large indigenous Maori population. Because disparities in healthcare often exist among minority populations, it could be expected that the White and Maori populations of New Zealand would have unequal access to healthcare. In order to understand the ways these disparities may present themselves, it became important to travel to New Zealand in order to interview both Western and natural healthcare professionals, public health officials, health activists and Maori people. In observing the various mechanisms within the New Zealand healthcare system, some stand out as effective ways of alleviating the racial disparities often seen in healthcare. These include the efficiency of regional District Health Boards, the benefits of individuals making decisions regarding their treatment plans and the importance of cohesion among the Maori and White populations. In forming a conclusion around these observations, it is evident that the integration of Maori culture into contemporary New Zealand has benefited the healthcare system. This unity has generated support for non-Western medical treatments, in turn forming a healthcare system that creates low barriers to entry for non-traditional forms of healthcare. These low barriers allow individuals to allocate available healthcare resources in ways that are most beneficial for them and are consistent with their tastes and preferences, maximizing efficiency.

Keywords : alternative and complementary healthcare, low barriers to entry, Maori populations, racial cohesion

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