

## 2022 Match Summary

Name of Match: Population Wellbeing - Older Persons

Location of Match: Virtual (New Zealand)

1. Describe the **purpose** of the match: (Maximum 500 words)

Older peoples' social isolation and support needs were magnified with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. In New Zealand 16% of the population is currently aged over 65. This is projected to increase to be 21% (1.2m) by 2034.

This match focused on research initiatives about loneliness and social isolation amongst Māori and Pacific peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand. It provided an opportunity to explore the assumptions that are made in policy and in the provision of services.

The workshop was an opportunity to showcase the magic that can happen when researchers are engaged with the communities that they are working in. It also illustrated that there are inexpensive ways of addressing a problem that if left can lead to illnesses such as depression and even premature death.

2. Describe the **leaders** who participated in the match (for example, were some of them peers, youth, family/caregivers, practitioners, policy makers, clinicians? Were they from community settings, government, NGOs, clinical settings?): (Maximum 500 words)

Our match consisted of representatives from university and research institutions, government agencies and non-governmental organisations some of whom provided leadership and advocacy and others providing services in community settings.

3. What do you see as the **game changer** for this match topic? (Game changer is defined as: a newly introduced element or factor that changes an existing situation or activity in a significant way.) (Max 500 words)

Our presenters covered research on cultural authenticity and autonomy when working with older people.

The Family Centre Social Policy Research Unit presented on their research which is focused on developing co-created, culturally authentic, age-friendly measures of loneliness and other social.

The evidence for assessing a social policy goal like loneliness, social connection and wellbeing usually involves social indicator measurement scales. Most current social measures have been developed in Europe and North America where the norms and assumptions centre around individualism, nuclear family units and secular values. Indigenous and many migrant groups

value collectivity, extended families and spirituality as their norms. Using co creation, participants shared their experience of key social indicator domains and developed questions around extended family responsibilities, spirituality and other culturally specific values. Regression analysis of the survey results was used to test associations between standard Western scales and the co-created scales of the social indicators. The early results demonstrated strong correlations, statistical reliability and validity, and strong factor analysis scores and may help explain the persistent gap in good outcomes for Māori when compared with non-Māori.

A collaborative research between the University of Waikato and Rauawaawa Kaumātua Charitable Trust aims to address the mana motuhake/identity-autonomy of kaumātua (older Māori aged 55-plus).

The focus is the health outcomes of a 'tuakana-teina' peer-educator model in relation to wellness, social connectedness, life enhancement and life transitions. An orientation programme that introduced life-transition-experienced kaumātua to the role of tuakana/peer educator in the context of peer support was developed. These kaumātua will serve as tuakana for other kaumātua who are teina/peers currently "in-experience" with life transitions. Drawing on the strengths of experienced kaumātua, younger (teina) peers were successfully supported through some of the most difficult moments of their lives. In a cost-effective community-led, kaumātua-driven administered initiative everybody benefited.

Both these research projects have been funded through the Ageing Well National Science Challenge <https://www.ageingwellchallenge.co.nz>

4. How will the match **support inclusion, resilience and growth** for this match topic and for the leaders who attended: (Maximum 500 words)

- Examining current research methodology and its appropriateness to different ethnicities and cultures.
- Both projects have been developed using co-creation approaches
- Older people if given the opportunity, techniques and tools are not only able to help themselves but also support others and experience improved health and wellbeing.