



12 July 2018

Self-sampling hailed for reducing screening inequities among Māori

Sixty-four Māori women have made a potentially life-saving move thanks to a self-sampling trial aimed at reducing barriers to cervical screening.

The women were part of a pilot study conducted by Waitemata and Auckland District Health Board's HPV (Human Papillomavirus) Self-Sampling Research Team, testing the effectiveness of the device and likelihood of uptake by groups unlikely to participate in the current National Cervical Screening Programme (NCSP).

A small number of Pacific and Asian women also took part and some members of the overall group were referred for appropriate follow-up as a result.

The trial won one of four major titles on 5 July during the inaugural Waitemata DHB Matāriki Awards – an event designed to celebrate DHB staff and initiatives working to achieve better health outcomes for Māori.

Māori women are twice as likely to be diagnosed with cervical cancer and three times more likely to die from the disease.

The HPV Self-Sampling Research Team worked with the group of women from West Auckland who hadn't been screened before, or were overdue, to implement the simple and safe screening test that participants could carry out themselves.

Feedback was sought on the test experience and processes to ensure they were appropriate and culturally acceptable.

The trial was recognised during the awards for empowering Māori women by listening to their views and redesigning the service around their feedback.

Waitemata and Auckland DHB Director Health Outcomes Dr Karen Bartholomew says the self-testing approach helped address any negative experiences and embarrassment that had previously caused some women to decide not to screen.

"This research is about addressing health inequities while improving health outcomes and patient experience," she says. "The whole pilot was designed to put the needs of Māori women first."

Study results will be considered by the NCSP for inclusion in the national screening schedule.

CEO Dr Dale Bramley says the HPV Self-Sampling technology is an example of Waitemata DHB adjusting to reflect the needs of the community it serves.



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“This kind of testing highlights the importance of tailoring quality research to improve health outcomes for Māori,” he says.

“This programme further enhances our ongoing work to reduce inequities for Māori which includes Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) Screening (a Waitemata/Auckland DHB initiative) and Bowel Screening.

“A number of our initiatives are also aimed at young people including our wahakura wananga promoting safe sleep among infants, the Awhi Tamariki health screening programme in schools and the Healthy Babies, Healthy Futures initiative educating Māori mothers about healthy lifestyle choices.”

Waitemata DHB is now also the lead DHB for the Kia Ora Hauora programme supporting more Maori into healthcare careers – complementing the work of the Maori Alliance Leadership Team (MALT) to achieve the same goal.

This programme is already bearing fruit with 37 new Māori nurses being employed at the DHB between January and March this year.

Background information

Pilot study

The pilot study was funded by Waitemata DHB, Auckland DHB and the Awhina Trust.

Matāriki Awards

The Matāriki Awards were held at Waitemata DHB on 5 July. There were four awards based on Waitemata DHB's four organisational values.

- **Everyone Matters** – won by new graduate physiotherapist, Te Hine-Ngaro Tuterangiwhiu for using her use of Te Reo Māori and Tikanga to support colleagues and advocate for patients.
- **Connected** – won by coordinator for the Healthy Babies, Healthy Futures programme, Danielle Tahuri for her work battling childhood obesity by educating mothers.
- **With Compassion** – won by public health nurse, Hiria Nepe, for her work within schools with a high Māori population, with children and their whānau for better outcomes.
- **Better, Best, Brilliant** – won by the HPV Self-Sampling Research Team for their work in empowering Maori women to self-sample for cervical screening.

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