



# Te Niwha

## Research Project Impact Case Study

Developing a Kaupapa Māori Framework for Infectious Disease Preparedness and Response in Aotearoa, New Zealand

### Short Research Title

\*\*\* Not necessarily the project title - please make title accessible to a general audience\*\*\*

A Kaupapa Māori Infectious Diseases Surveillance Framework

### Key researchers

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## Introduction

### Research purpose

The project seeks to develop novel approaches to infectious disease (ID) surveillance, which meet the needs of Māori communities and leverage the strengths of kaupapa Māori health and social service providers. It is evident that the current ID surveillance system is not fit for purpose for whānau Māori; Māori have much higher morbidity and mortality rates from a range of infectious diseases, including from the COVID-19 pandemic. These health inequities have damaging social and economic consequences for Aotearoa New Zealand as a whole.

### Research approach

We have collaborated with the Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency to engage with kaupapa Māori health and social service providers and whānau Māori. We are also collaborating with two other Te Niwha-funded research projects.

The project gathers information from focus group sessions and interviews with providers and whānau about their current engagement with the ID surveillance system and the information they need to protect their communities. We are also gathering data through interviews with public health experts about how the current ID surveillance system works, how they engage with Māori communities and what improvements are needed. Using qualitative analysis, this information will be used to develop a kaupapa Māori framework for ID preparedness and response and make specific recommendations about changes to the current ID surveillance system.

### Alignment with Te Niwha

The project aligns with the Te Niwha Investment Objectives by strengthening collaboration between researchers, health agencies and kaupapa Māori providers; improving health outcomes and increasing equity of health outcomes; identifying and addressing key gaps within the ID surveillance system; and enhancing community preparedness and readiness for infectious disease outbreaks.

## Results

Data gathering is still in the early stages. However, several key themes have been identified:

- ID surveillance is impacted by disengagement of whānau with mainstream health systems.
- ID surveillance system should be more flexible and decentralised to disseminate and gather data effectively from diverse communities.
- Kaupapa Māori providers need improved access to data to enhance ID prevention and control.
- Te ao Māori systems of manaakitanga and whanaungatanga should be leveraged to enhance ID surveillance systems.
- ID surveillance language needs to change to engage kaupapa Māori providers.

## Impact

A feature of kaupapa Māori research is that it must demonstrate impact for participating communities. As part of engagement with providers, we need to demonstrate the benefits of the research for their work with their communities. We will be presenting our findings back to participants. Therefore, this project will have two immediate impacts:

- Improving equity of health outcomes for whānau Māori;
- Supporting kaupapa Māori providers in their ID and pandemic preparedness plans;
- Enhancing whānau understanding of ID protection and control.

From the data gathered through this research, a kaupapa Māori framework for ID preparedness and response will be developed that is responsive to the information needs of kaupapa Māori providers and whānau. This will address a gap in the ID surveillance sector, as there is currently no such framework to guide policy development. The research

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project will have two key outputs, one joint academic paper published in conjunction with the University of Otago team and a report including specific recommendations. These recommendations are intended to support future ID surveillance policy development.

Although results are still emerging, we can point to several potential high-level outcomes that align with SSIF areas of research impact:

- Language of ID surveillance becomes more relevant and responsive to the needs of Māori communities.
- Improved communication between the ID surveillance system, kaupapa Māori health and social service providers and whānau.
- ID surveillance system becomes more flexible and decentralised to improve data gathering and dissemination e.g. investment in more community-based testing for IDs, ID data provided specific to needs of each kaupapa Māori provider.
- Kaupapa Māori providers receive the data they need to effectively contribute to preventing and controlling IDs in their communities.
- Workforce capability for managing ID surveillance data at the provider level is enhanced.
- Whānau have a greater understanding of IDs and the steps they can take to protect themselves and their communities.

### Conclusion

The key impact of this research project is to increase equity of outcomes for whānau Māori in terms of ID morbidity and mortality rates by identifying and addressing the shortcomings of the current ID surveillance system. Developing a kaupapa Māori framework for ID preparedness and response will help to inform specific recommendations for improvements to the current system. This will in turn enhance Aotearoa New Zealand's overall infectious disease preparedness.