

Te Whare Takatāpui: A guideline for trans affirming and inclusive perinatal services

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Background:

Transgender and non-binary (trans) people are increasingly accessing perinatal care both as pregnant people and non-gestational parents. Existing research highlights that trans people can feel unwelcome, excluded from, and unsafe in perinatal care settings. This results from both overt discrimination towards trans people in perinatal care along with unexamined norms and assumptions resulting from the assumption that perinatal service users will be cisgender women in heterosexual relationships. Existing guidelines for progressing trans inclusive perinatal services were developed in the United Kingdom and there are no guidelines that address the unique cultural context of Aotearoa NZ.

Methods:

The Trans Pregnancy Care Project was a sequential mixed-methods study with two phases. Phase one involved semi-structured qualitative interviews with 20 trans people about their perinatal care experiences as either gestational or non-gestational parents. Phase one informed the development of a survey of perinatal care providers (n=476) to understand their preparedness to provide trans affirming and inclusive perinatal care. Findings from the two phases of the study were synthesized to develop an applied guideline for trans affirming and inclusive perinatal services informed a hauora Māori model - Te Whare Takatāpui (Kerekere, 2023).

Results:

The guideline provides conceptual and practical ways to improve perinatal services for trans people and their whanau/families. There are six values that make up the model: Whakapapa (genealogy), Wairua (spirituality), Mauri (life spark), Mana (authority/self-determination), Tapu (sacredness) and Tikanga (rules and protocols). When the six values of Te Whare Takatāpui are accounted for, perinatal care can shelter and nurture trans whanau/families.

Conclusion:

The guideline provides a holistic approach to trans affirming and inclusive perinatal care that honors the unique cultural context of Aotearoa NZ and that centres mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge).

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