

The Koha Project: Culturally centred contingency management for Māori with harmful methamphetamine use

Authors:

Eleanor Brittain¹, Simon T. Bennett¹, Gauranga Patel²

¹*School of Psychology, Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand*, ²*Te Whatu Ora Health New Zealand, Wellington, New Zealand*

Presenter's email: e.brittain@massey.ac.nz

Background: *The health implications of methamphetamine use are as extensive as they are deleterious, contributing to harms which extend well beyond the lives of individuals, affecting whānau (families), hapū and iwi (Māori collectives), and Māori communities throughout Aotearoa New Zealand. With a significant increase in methamphetamine use, and estimated social harms costing NZ \$1.5 billion in 2024, the imperative to develop evidence-based and culturally relevant solutions is both evident and urgent.*

Description of Model of Care/Intervention: *Contingency management is a long-established behavioural intervention using positive reinforcement. In this study the target behaviour is abstinence from methamphetamine. By positively reinforcing abstinence from methamphetamine the goal is to decrease methamphetamine use, to reduce the associated harms, and to promote overall wellbeing. Through community partnership co-design with services who work with Māori experiencing harmful substance use in Wellington New Zealand, an intervention protocol that prioritises Māori cultural needs and experiences has been developed.*

Effectiveness/Acceptability/Implementation: *There is a substantial body of research supporting the effectiveness of contingency management in the treatment of substance use, including with Indigenous communities. This evidence-base has been integrated in the intervention protocol, and as a small-scale pilot study, the aims are to evaluate the impact of a culturally centred contingency management intervention for harmful methamphetamine use among Māori.*

Conclusion and Next Steps: *Delivery of the intervention is planned for May 2026 through early 2027 in Wellington New Zealand.*

Implications on communities, practice, policy and/or First Nations communities: *This project represents innovative, localised, and culturally grounded developments in clinical practice. There are many meaningful implications to influence clinical practice and for the provision of care in the addiction and mental health sectors in Aotearoa New Zealand, with the overarching aspiration to achieve better wellbeing outcomes for Māori.*

Disclosure of Interest Statement: *This research is supported by a Health Research Council (HRC) New Zealand Rangahau Hauora Māori Emerging Researcher First Grant (HRC Ref ID number 24/642). No pharmaceutical or other grants have been received in the development of this research.*