**Cultural Safety versus Cultural Competency: why it matters for Māori health**

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| Eliminating Indigenous and ethnic health inequities requires addressing the determinants of health inequities which includes institutionalised racism, and ensuring a health care system that delivers appropriate and equitable care. There is growing recognition of the importance of cultural competency and cultural safety at both individual health practitioner and organisational levels to achieve equitable health care. However, there are mixed definitions and understandings of cultural competency and cultural safety, and how best to achieve them. This presentation will review the literature on cultural safety and cultural competency and present a proposed definition for ‘cultural safety’ in Aotearoa New Zealand. This definition highlights the need for health practitioners, healthcare organisations and health systems to be engaged in working towards cultural safety and critical consciousness. To do this, they must be prepared to critique the ‘taken for granted’ power structures and be prepared to challenge their own culture and cultural systems rather than prioritise becoming ‘competent’ in the cultures of others. The objective of cultural safety activities also needs to be clearly linked to achieving health equity. Healthcare organisations and authorities need to be held accountable for providing culturally safe care, as defined by patients and their communities, and as measured through progress towards achieving health equity.A move to cultural safety rather than cultural competency is recommended for Māori health. |