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## **Whitiwhitia i te ora: A Call to wellness**

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Introduction: A small study completed in New Zealand compares occupational therapy with Maaori (indigenous to New Zealand) perspectives of health.

Objectives:

- to share evidence of an indigenous perspective of health that may support more effective service provision by occupational therapists to Maaori service users.
- To discuss concepts of cultural capability identified in the research.

Methods:

The research is based on material gathered for a Masters in Maaori studies using qualitative data with some quantitative components. A small group of occupational therapists responded to a questionnaire and interviews of five key informants were completed from; a specialist in the profession, a Maaori health specialist, a maaori workforce development specialist and Maaori occupational therapists.

Results

The study shows the profession aligns in some health perspectives and faces challenges with others. Occupational therapy practice can respond well to Maaori populations when indigenous knowledge is acknowledged, valued and used to support wellness.

Conclusion

Occupational therapy science and indigenous knowledge are built on distinctive philosophies, methodologies and criteria and when delivering services to Maaori the interface between these two realities needs to be seen as of equal value to Maaori service users.

Contribution to the practice / evidence base of occupational therapy.

This research forms the first piece of work to indicate how occupational therapists can support achievement of whaanau ora where Māori families are supported to achieve the fullness of health and wellbeing within Te Ao Māori (the world of Maaori) and New Zealand society as a whole.