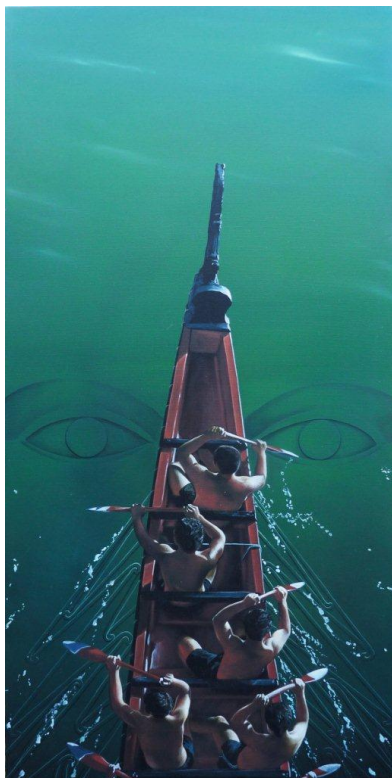


Youth Wellbeing Study Longitudinal Survey

Findings from Wave One - Rangatahi Māori



About the Youth Wellbeing Study

The Youth Wellbeing Study is a research project about the wellbeing of adolescents or rangatahi in New Zealand, with a specific focus on Non-Suicidal Self-Injury (NSSI). Our goal is to investigate, over time, what leads some youth to hurt themselves on purpose, and to understand where they turn to for help, or what might stop them from seeking help. We want to support these youth and their families, whānau and communities (including schools and peers), by developing workshops and resources with them about recognising the signs of NSSI, how youth can seek help, and how others can help those who are self-injuring.

The research project uses a survey to measure youth wellbeing. The survey has been conducted in 16 different schools within the Wellington region under the supervision of the research team. It takes students around 30 minutes to complete it, either electronically or by pencil and paper.

The survey is longitudinal; the same group of students complete it each year over three to four years as they progress through secondary school. Understanding their

wellbeing at different time points allows us to look at the factors that place youth at risk of self-injuring, as well as the factors that protect them from self-injury.

From November 2012 to December 2013 we conducted Wave 1 (the first year) of our survey with Year 9 and 10 students in the 16 Wellington schools. This is a summary of the findings from Wave 1 of the survey for participants who identified that they have Māori ancestry.

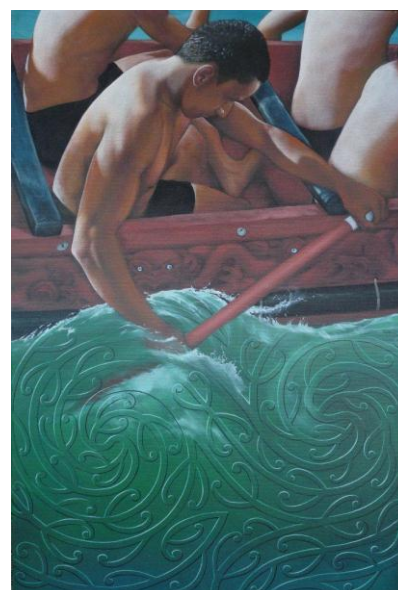
Who are the 'Rangatahi Māori' survey participants?

Nine hundred and thirty seven students took part in the survey. Of these, 20% (191 students) indicated that they had Māori ancestry by answering 'yes' to the question, "Are any of your parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents Māori?" The results in this summary are for these 191 students, referred to as 'rangatahi Māori'.

Forty four percent of these rangatahi Māori identified as male, 55% as female and 1% as transgendered. The age range was between 13-15 years, with most (62%) being 13 years of age.

Sexuality

Ninety percent of the rangatahi Māori identified as completely or mostly heterosexual, 2% as bisexual, 1% as completely or mostly homosexual, and 3% as asexual. 74% of the rangatahi Māori reported they did not worry about their sexuality.



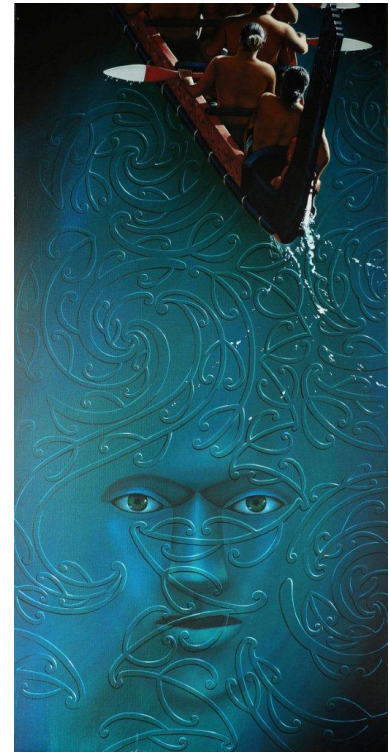
Ethnic Identity

Students were asked to identify what ethnic groups they belong to, and to choose their main ethnicity.

Seventy four percent of rangatahi Māori identified as Pākehā, 76% as Māori, 7% as Samoan, 4% as Cook Islands Māori, less than 1% as Tongan, less than 1% as Niuean, less than 1% as Chinese, and 10% identified with an 'other' ethnicity, for example Croatian, Dutch, Irish, or Tokelauan.

When asked to choose just one ethnicity as their primary ethnicity, 35% of rangatahi Māori chose Māori as their primary ethnicity. Fifty one percent chose Pākehā, and 8% indicated that they could not choose just one ethnicity.

When asked to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with the statement, "My ethnic group is an important part of how I think of myself", 43% of rangatahi Māori either agreed or strongly agreed, and 31% were neutral.



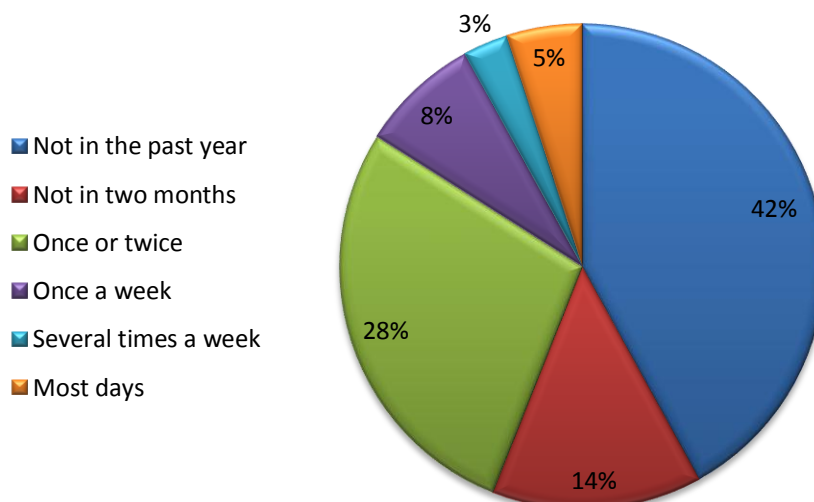
Identity as Māori

We used questions from the Multidimensional Model of Māori Identity and Cultural Engagement (MMM-ICE) developed by Houkamau and Sibley in 2010 as a tool for assessing how someone feels about their identity as Māori. One hundred and thirty one rangatahi Māori completed these questions. As a group, these rangatahi Māori described a mostly positive identity as Māori, with an average score of 5 on a scale where 1 is regarded as having a low or negative identity as Māori and 7 is regarded as a strongly positive identity as Māori.

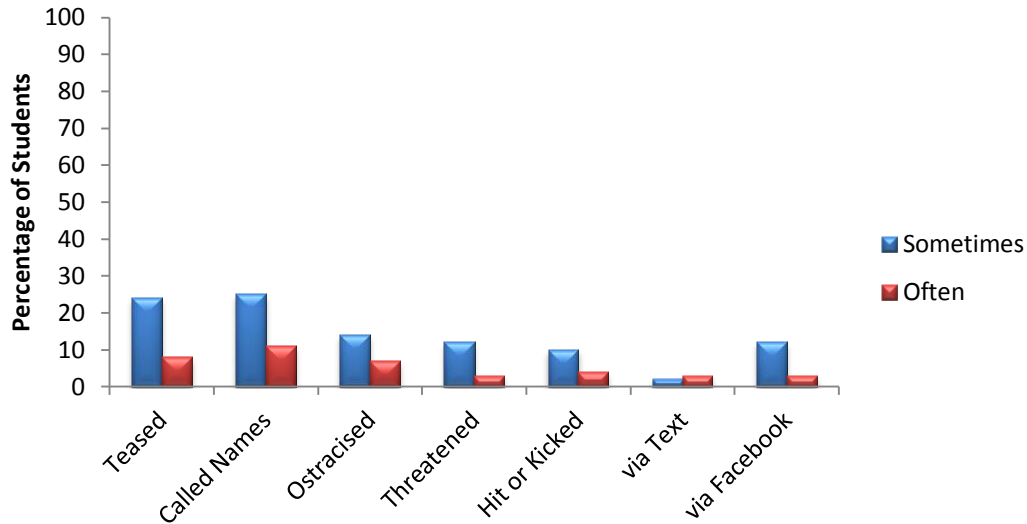
Bullying

Students were asked if they had been bullied in the last 12 months.

Extent of Bullying of Rangatahi Māori

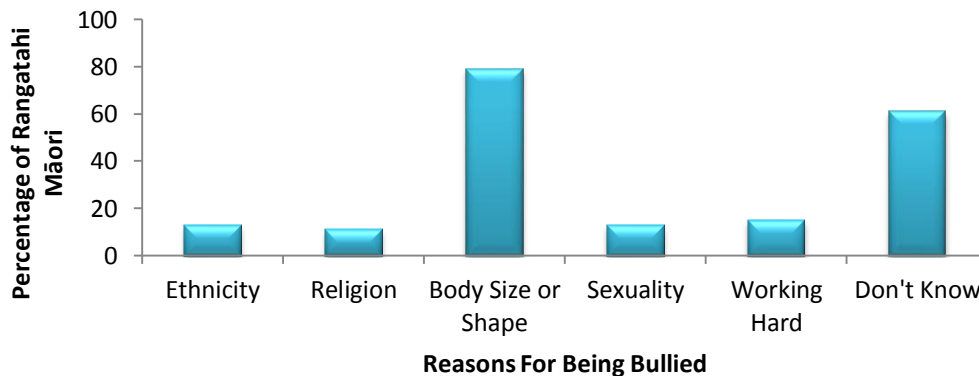


Types of bullying



Rangatahi Māori who had been bullied in the past two months were asked how bad the bullying was. Twenty eight percent of them reported it was not bad, 35% reported it was a little bad, 22% reported it was pretty bad, 9% reported it was really bad, and 7% reported that it was terrible.

The most common reasons for rangatahi Māori being bullied were body size or shape, and working hard at school. However, a large proportion of rangatahi Māori also indicated that they did not know why they were bullied.



Of the rangatahi Māori who had been bullied in the past two months, 13% had waggged school at least once in the past month because they were afraid of being bullied. Twenty-eight percent of rangatahi Māori reported that they almost never ignore the bullying of other students. Eleven percent of rangatahi Māori thought that other students almost always take action when they know a student is being bullied in school, and 24% thought that teachers almost always take action when they know a student is being bullied. Overall, three-quarters of rangatahi Māori agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, 'I feel safe at school'.

Students were also asked to indicate whether or not they had bullied other students in their school. Forty five percent of rangatahi Māori indicated they had never bullied another student, and 25% indicated they had not bullied another student in the last 12 months. Twenty six percent of rangatahi Māori indicated they had bullied another student once or twice in the last year though, and 3% indicated they had bullied another student in their school at least once a week in the past year. Of these rangatahi Māori who had bullied other students, 26% had done so via text messaging, 26% via social media, and 23% via email.

Alcohol and Drug Use

Seven percent of rangatahi Māori chose not to respond to the questions about alcohol and drug use. Of the students that did respond, 27% reported that they had drunk alcohol in the past 12 months (more than a few sips), 15% had smoked cannabis and 8% had used another drug to get high.



Suicidal thoughts and behaviours

When rangatahi Māori were asked if they had ever thought about committing suicide, 82% said they had either never thought about it or if they had, that it was just as a passing thought.

The research project has a clear risk management process in place to alert the school guidance counsellor(s) of students at risk of suicidal behaviours. Dependant on how students answer particular questions around suicide, the researchers are able to gauge how at-risk they may be, using a scoring system (the students do not know the details of this system but are told that if the researchers identify them as at-risk youth, they will be followed up by the school guidance counsellor(s) and referred to relevant agencies if appropriate). The research team is also available for consultation regarding these students. This process was appreciated by schools, as it helped identify students at-risk who may otherwise have remained unidentified.

Non-Suicidal Self-Injury

Eighteen percent of rangatahi Māori indicated they had engaged in self-injury at some point and 14% had thought about it. The most common types of NSSI were cutting, scratching, punching or banging themselves and preventing wounds from healing.

Forty five percent of rangatahi Māori reported they knew someone who had hurt themselves on purpose, mostly friends (42% knew a friend who had self-injured). Fourteen percent of rangatahi Māori knew a family member who had self-injured, 6% had a boyfriend or girlfriend who self-injured, and 19% said they had an acquaintance who self-injured.

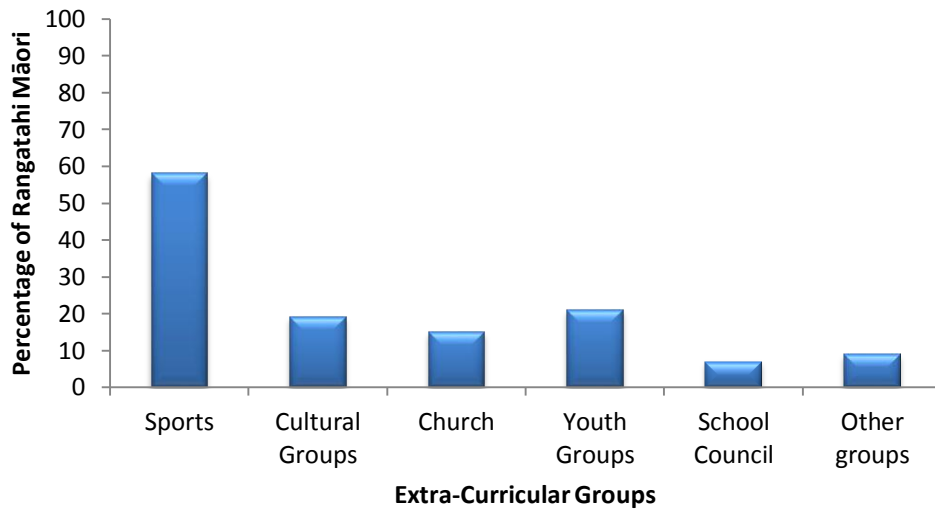


Positive wellbeing

Students were asked to indicate who they could talk to if they were having a serious problem. Fifty five percent of rangatahi Māori indicated that they could talk to their parents, 26% their grandparents, 26% their extended family (many specified aunts, uncles, cousins, etc.), and 22% said they could talk to a family friend.

Many students felt school was an important part of their life. Over half (53%) of rangatahi Māori agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, 'I feel like I'm a part of the school I go to', 65% of rangatahi Māori agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, 'My school is important to me', and 39% of rangatahi Māori agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, 'I like school a lot'. Fifty one percent of rangatahi Māori felt that they were doing well at school.

Most rangatahi Māori felt happy in their family life and felt as though they were cared for (e.g. 67% reported that they feel very close to their family). Many rangatahi Māori were also involved in an organisation or extra-curricular group.



Additionally, the majority of rangatahi Māori appeared to have a healthy self-esteem and felt good about themselves; 73% reported feeling satisfied with themselves, 81% agreed that they have a number of good qualities, and 71% reported that they do take a positive attitudes towards themselves.

Where to from here?

We will be coming back into the schools who participated in Wave 1 to run the survey again with the same group of students each year, over the next three or more years. This is so we can get information on how students' wellbeing changes over time, and what factors interconnect with each other. The Māori researchers in the team are also in the process of setting up focus groups/hui with rangatahi Māori and wānanga with whānau and those who work with rangatahi. The goal of these hui and wānanga is to have kanohi-ki-te-kanohi (face to face) discussions about some of the issues that we have looked at in the survey.

If you have any comments or queries about the above summary, or for more information on the wānanga and/or hui, please contact Tahlia Kingi (Tahlia.Kingi@vuw.ac.nz or 04 473 0009).

For information about Health and Disability advocacy please contact the Health and Disability Commission (advocacy services) on 0800 555 050 or email advocacy@hds.org.nz

References:

Houkamau, C. A., & Sibley, C. G. (2010). The Multi-Dimensional Model of Māori Identity and Cultural Engagement. *New Zealand Journal of Psychology*, 39(1), 8-28.

Artwork by Theresa Reihana (Ngāti Hine)

