



Whenua ki te Whenua

Community Birth Service Seminar 2015
Raeleen de Joux



Kaupapa

- Setting the scene
- Traditional birthing practices
- Cultural interface
- Impact of current practices
- Focus on the future
- Questions?



Papatuanuku

"the earth mother"

Spiritual Beginnings

*E tama kei roto i te kura waka
i te huaki pouri
nau mai, haere mai*

My child who lies within the womb
On the edge of darkness
Come forth into the world

Cultural Concepts

*“Our concept of **ūkaipo**, literally to feed, is not just the physical nurturing but also the spiritual and emotional nurturing which serves to eventually make the adult.”*

Honourable Tariana Turia 2006



Ukaipo

- Physical nurturing of the baby
- Meeting the spiritual and emotional needs of the baby
- Links the baby back to protection at a generational level.
- Protection of antibodies passed from generation to generation is accumulative
- Never sever the Ukaipo link – to achieve this every generation must be breastfed

***“Ko te whenua te wai-u mo
nga uri whakatipu”***

Wai U

Literally this means milk from the breast.

The whakatauki (proverb) compares sustenance from the land to milk from the woman's breast and demonstrates the importance of women in nurturing the iwi.



Traditional Maori Society

- Mana Wahine
- Whanaungatanga
- Tikanga
- Traditional knowledge



Mana Wahine



Maori women held mana and status in Maori society that recognised whakapapa links to Papatuanuku, the Earth Mother, and acknowledged them as Te Whare Tapu o te Whare Tangata

Nga Kuia Rongonui

Mana Wahine “signifies the process of self determination by which we (Maori women) determine our social and cultural future and give effect to our status as tangata whenua, as Maori women”.

Evans, 1993



***“Atawhaitia nga wahine Maori,
Ko ratou te poutokomanawa o te whanau, hapu me te iwi.”***

Whakawhanaungatanga



The concept of whakawhanaungatanga is based on social relationships and generates a sense of family cohesion and co-operation

Tikanga



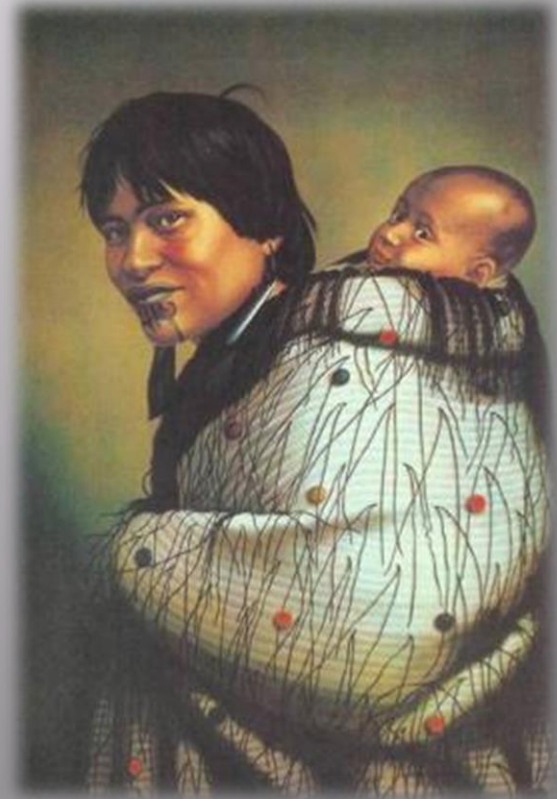
“the customary system of values and practices that have developed over time and are deeply embedded in the social context”

Distinct sets of tikanga governing daily live and interaction within the whanau

- Tracking of biological and non-biological family relationships and continuation of family bloodlines
- Establishing what was appropriate behaviour for women
- Forming of partnerships to have offspring
- Appropriate behaviour for women, respect towards women and care of women
- Guiding birthing practice and infant care

Traditional Knowledge

- Birthing practices were conducive to early establishment of breastfeeding.
- Breastfeeding was an integral part of traditional Māori society and ensured survival of whanau, hapu and iwi.
- Breastfeeding was such a valued practice its benefits were recognised in the social acceptance of whāngai ū (wet nursing)
- **100% exclusive breastfeeding rates**



“He aroha whaea rere, he potiki ukaipo”

A mother’s love for her offspring, a breastfeeding child

Tapu/Noa

- Tapu literally means sacred, under restriction.
- “Tapu enabled the social life of the community to be maintained, it was the basis of law and order and its respect ensured the survival of the community”.
- Noa is the opposite of tapu and literally means free from tapu. It provides a balance to ensure freedom to participate in other aspects of every day living.

“I am mindful that there are much more birthing practices that Maori in pre European times used to aid fertility, labour and during the post natal phase. Knowledge that used herbal medicines, chants, massage, singing, positioning and ultimately respect to the wahine for growing the whakapapa and keeping the iwi alive”.

Kelly Tikao 2014



Makereti: The Old Time Maori

“Her u (breasts) which had received special attention during the months of her pregnancy would have the waiu (milk) flowing easily, and so the child fed from the breast soon after it is born. In the old days the u were mirimiri (massaged), and also the matamata (nipples), and a Maori mother never had the difficulty of the women who had come into contact with civilisation. When a woman became hapu, her breasts were attended from three months after right up to the birth of the child.”

Implications of traditional birthing practices on breastfeeding??



Cultural Interface

- Impact of colonisation
- Conflicting values
- Impact of practices

Impact of Colonisation

“We have all had the same painful history of colonisation. (Maori women need to celebrate our survival .. to share the past .. to have a chance to rename the world about us and to build our aspirations for self-determination and control of our own destinies”

Puhi Rangiaho



Colonial Women

- In early colonial society breastfeeding was the norm amongst missionary women and early settlers. Women who could not breastfeed used wet nurses, often Māori women.
- By the 1800's, following overseas trends, breastfeeding began to become unfashionable, especially amongst urban middle class women.
- In the 1800's in Pakeha society, midwives, female friends or relatives helped women with giving birth and also gave women advice about breastfeeding

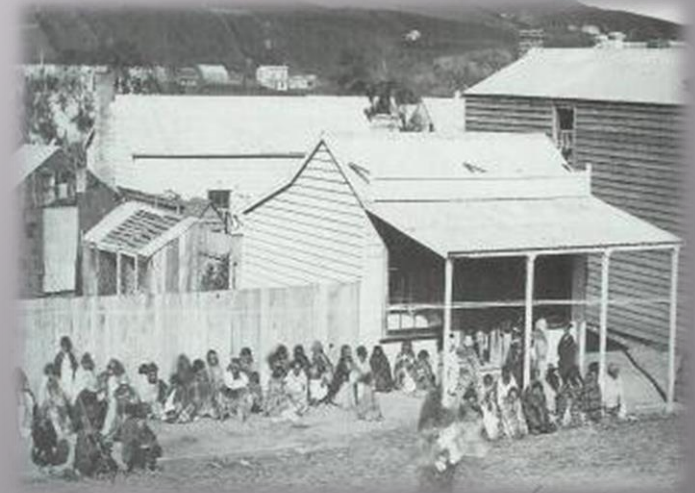


Maori Women

- Fragmentation of traditional society
- Isolation from whanau, hapu and iwi
- Loss of traditional knowledge
- Loss of interdependent relationships
- Break down of hierarchical structures
- Drift to urbanised areas to seek employment
- Birthing alone in mainstream hospitals

Decade of Change

- Midwives Registration Act 1904
- Tohunga Suppression Act 1907
- Infants Act 1908
- Native Health Act 1909.
- Adoption of Children by Natives, part of the Native Land Act 1909.
- 1907 Society for the Promotion of the Health of Women and Children (New Zealand Plunket Society)



***“It is too often considered unfashionable for a
Woman to nurse her own children”***

Truby King 1909

Legislation

Infants Act 1908 has restrictions on retaining an infant in care for the purpose of nursing for more than seven consecutive days unless licensed as a foster-parent. These provisions did not extend only to “Native” women.

Native Health Act 1909.

Matters commonly attributed to this act are adoption/whāngai and breast feeding by Māori women.

Adoption of Children by Natives, ss 161-170 of the Native Land Act 1909 puts an end to adoption “in accordance with Native custom” and sets out the conditions under which Native adoptions can occur. These provisions continued in variations of the Native Land Act until repealed by the Adoption Act 1955.



Conflicting Values

“a great advantage of promoting hospital births among Maori women is the opportunity to educate them on the virtues of breastfeeding”

Committee of Inquiry into Maternity Services in New Zealand. 1938

Conflicting values

- Women instructed not to feed on demand, two minutes on each breast every 4 hours
- Mothers advised to leave babies alone between feeds and restrict attention so as not to spoil them
- Babies put in a central nursery away from their mothers and fed to a strict four hourly routine



***“People must honour the mother who feeds
her baby the way nature intends.”***

Truby King

Impact on Practice

“The introduction of the feeding bottle into Maori homes has caused as many deaths as the guns of Hongi”

Dr Te Rangihiroa (Peter Buck) 1908



The Breastfeeding Journey

- 1950's Natural Childbirth Movement (later became Parents Centre) - questioned the experts and successfully lobbied for changes in the regimented hospital approach to birthing
- **1937 Womens Health League, *Te Ropu O Te Ora* – Tipu Ora Programme**
- **1953 Maori Women's Welfare League, *Te Roopu Wahine Maori Toko I Te Ora***
- 1964 La Leche League established in New Zealand with the motto “mothering through breastfeeding”



“By 1971 breastfeeding rates began to rise”



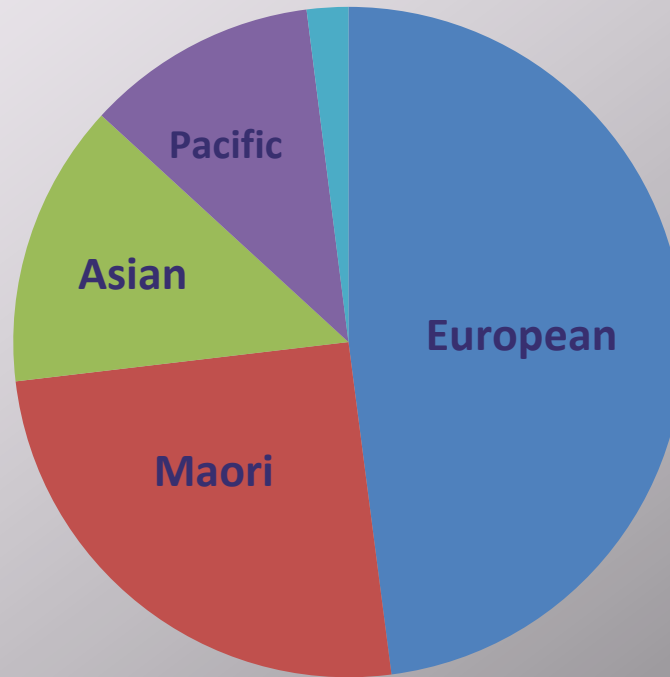
Changing Times

- Demographics
- Current practice
- Challenges

Demograhics

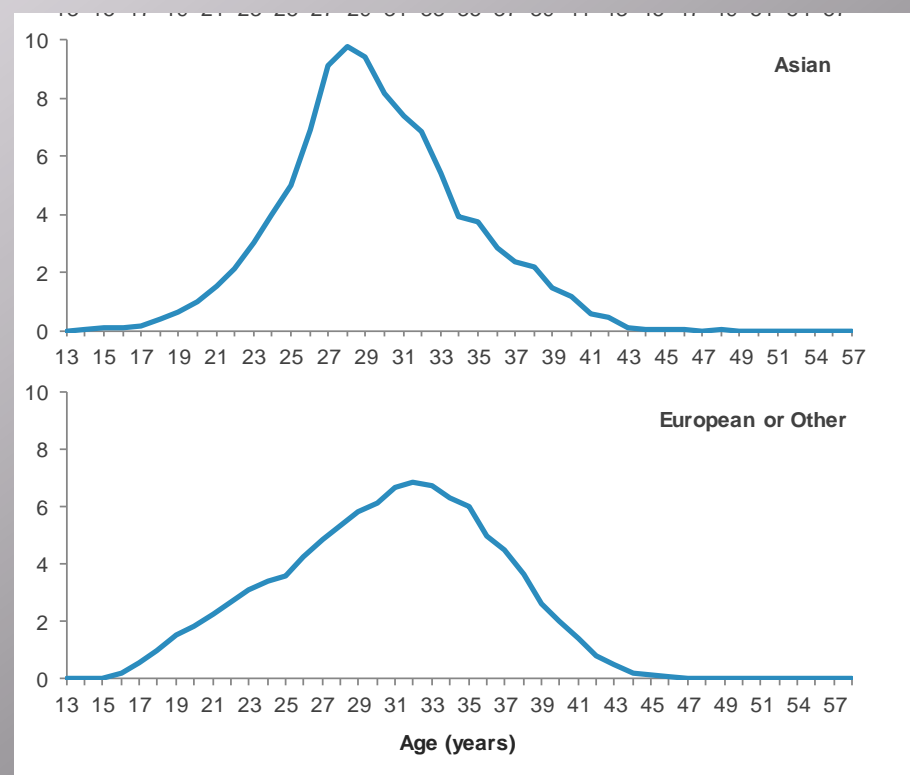
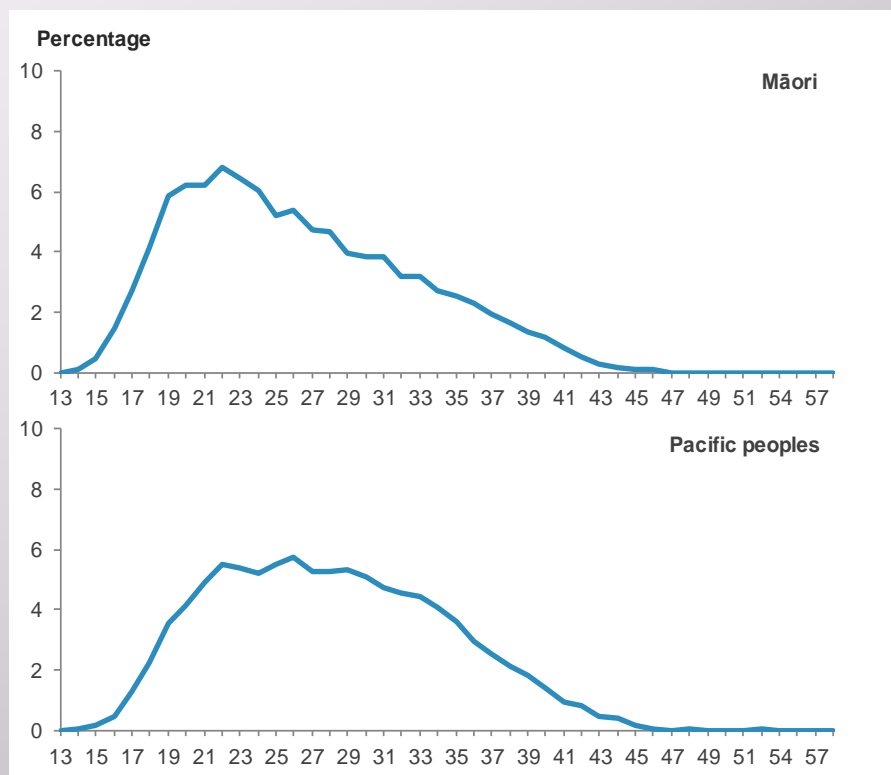


Number of live births by ethnicity



- More likely to be a single mother of young age
- More likely to live in an area of high deprivation
- Socio-economically disadvantaged
- One in five live in an extended family environment
- High percentage smoke in pregnancy

Births by Age and Ethnicity



Challenges

- Higher prevalence of maternal risk factors
- Greater maternity needs
- Inequalities in access to care
- Lower levels of satisfaction with services.

Hapu Ora 2013



Maori World Realities

- Live as part of an extended whanau
- Socially challenged
- Doing the best they can with the available resources
- Searching for identity



“The mother who opts not to breastfeed or does not do so as long as she planned is doing the best that she can with the resources at hand”



Focus on the Future

- Bi-cultural Practice
- Mapping a Pathway
- Opportunities

Bicultural Practice

“Traditional Maori birthing knowledge does have a place in today’s obstetric care and can provide a natural and healthy birthing alternative for all New Zealanders”.



Kelly Tikao Ngai Tahu

Implications of Birthing Practices

21st Century

- Traditional birthing practices integrated into models of care
- Kotahitanga – unity in service provision
- Strong relationships with whanau, hapu and iwi
- Manaakitanga



**“Firstly, acknowledge the differences
- and then value them”**

Mapping a Pathway



- Whakawhanaungatanga – engaging with key stakeholders
- Capacity building
- Recognition of cultural values and practices

Mau tonu ki te Maoritanga.....



- Kaupapa Māori birthing wananga utilising traditional knowledge
- Promoting breastfeeding as tikanga best practice
- Providing hui for kuia and kaumatua
- Advocacy – addressing social issues



Kaumatua are repositories of knowledge and tikanga

Treaty Based Practice

- Kaumatua have the mana and wisdom to support you if a cultural issue should arise. Kaumatua ensure **protection** for whanau and staff through tikanga and upholding cultural values
- Relationships with Maori health providers ensures good continuity of care for Maori women and their whanau and encourages active **participation** within the service.
- Tamariki Ora and Whanau Ora programmes link in with birthing, pregnancy and parenting services. Strong links with providers are a good indicator of working in **partnership** with Maori.



Maori: the Many Faces

Maori Tuturu

Maori brought up in a traditional setting steeped in tikanga, traditional practices and cultural values. Fluent in the native Maori language.

Contemporary Maori

Born in urban settings away from whanau, hapu and iwi. Seeking their whakapapa, learning about their Maori heritage and likely to speak contemporary Maori.

Delocated Maori

Denies or unaware of their Maori heritage, records their ethnicity as New Zealander. Unlikely to utilise Maori health services or Maori support networks.



Maori Models



"Let us return to nurturing our babies according to the ways of our ancestors by sharing the knowledge of breastfeeding"

Maori Models

Taha tinana (physical health)

The capacity for physical growth and development.

Taha wairua (spiritual health)

The capacity for faith and wider communication

Taha whānau (family health)

The capacity to belong, to care and to share where individuals are part of wider social systems

Taha hinengaro (mental health)

The capacity to communicate, to think and to feel mind and body are inseparable



Fathers are part of the picture too

*“I helped my wife breastfeed by supporting and physically helping her put baby on the breast
Men are 100% involved with their babies too.”*



“I gave my partner reading about how to latch on and when she was having difficulty I suggested different positions to try.”



“Support by the father is associated with successful breastfeeding.”

Gunn, 1984

Whanau Ora

“Each whanau has the capacity to care for itself Support them to find the ways to do this. And because every whanau is different , they will find different ways to do things...”



Kukutai Whanau

“Whanau Tino Rangatira”

- Partners, mothers and sisters play an important role in supporting decisions to breastfeed and in overcoming barriers to breastfeed
- Infant feeding comes up for discussion around ordinary home life and meetings during one on one conversations
- Health promotion and maternity services should not overlook the whanau as a primary source of information and support.



Dr Marewa Glover

Questions



Whakahoki ki Tou Ukaipo!!



*Breastfeeding is not a lifestyle choice,
it is tikanga Māori, every child's right"*

Dr Marewa Glover



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