

The background features a gradient from red at the top to blue at the bottom. On the left side, there is a large circular scale with markings from 40 to 260 in increments of 10. Several smaller circular diagrams with arrows are scattered across the background, some overlapping the scale. The text is centered in white, sans-serif font.

MEDICINAL USE OF NATIVE PLANT LIFE IN NEW ZEALAND: ANALYZING RONGOA MAORI AND WESTERN SCIENCE INTERACTIONS

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WHAT DID I DO?

- Analyzed the methodology of my research and outlined ethical research practices
- Researched use of native plant life in rongoa Maori (focus on harakeke, kawakawa, koromiko, and manuka)
- Compiled data on the chemical composition of the above plants
- Discussed western and indigenous knowledge collaborations in the form of policy and proposals for reform

WHAT WILL I TALK ABOUT TODAY?

- Conclusions from my research on Maori and western medicinal uses of native plant life
- Western and indigenous knowledge collaborations in medicine

OVERVIEW OF RONGOA MAORI

- Traditional Maori healing
- Varies from iwi to iwi but certain characteristics are common to most
- Holistic and interconnected healing principles
- Illnesses commonly seen as multi-layered
 - Physical, mental, and spiritual
 - Balance between tapu and noa
- Can be divided into 5 categories

1) KARAKIA AND RITENGA

- Incantations and rituals
- Necessary for a successful treatment
- Often regarded as the most important component of rongoa

2) MIRIMIRI

- Form of massage
- Relieve sore joints and limbs
- Force spirits, or kehua, from patient's body (less common)

3) WATER

- Cleansing rituals
- Treat variety of sicknesses
- Source is important
 - Springs or clear, natural streams

4) MINOR SURGICAL PROCEDURES

- Blood letting
- Small incisions
- Relieve swelling or drain infections

5) RAKAU RONGOA

- Plant medicines
- Most effective when paired with spiritual treatment (often in the form of a karakia)

UTU (BALANCE)

Tapu

- Off-limits
- Commonly defined as spirituality
 - BUT has secular and social components
- Used to prevent sickness and enforce rules

Noa

- State of relaxed access
- Opposite of tapu

TOHUNGA

- Practitioners of traditional Maori healing
- Learn from elders and apprenticeships
- Revered as experts in the community
- Work independently or contracted by government

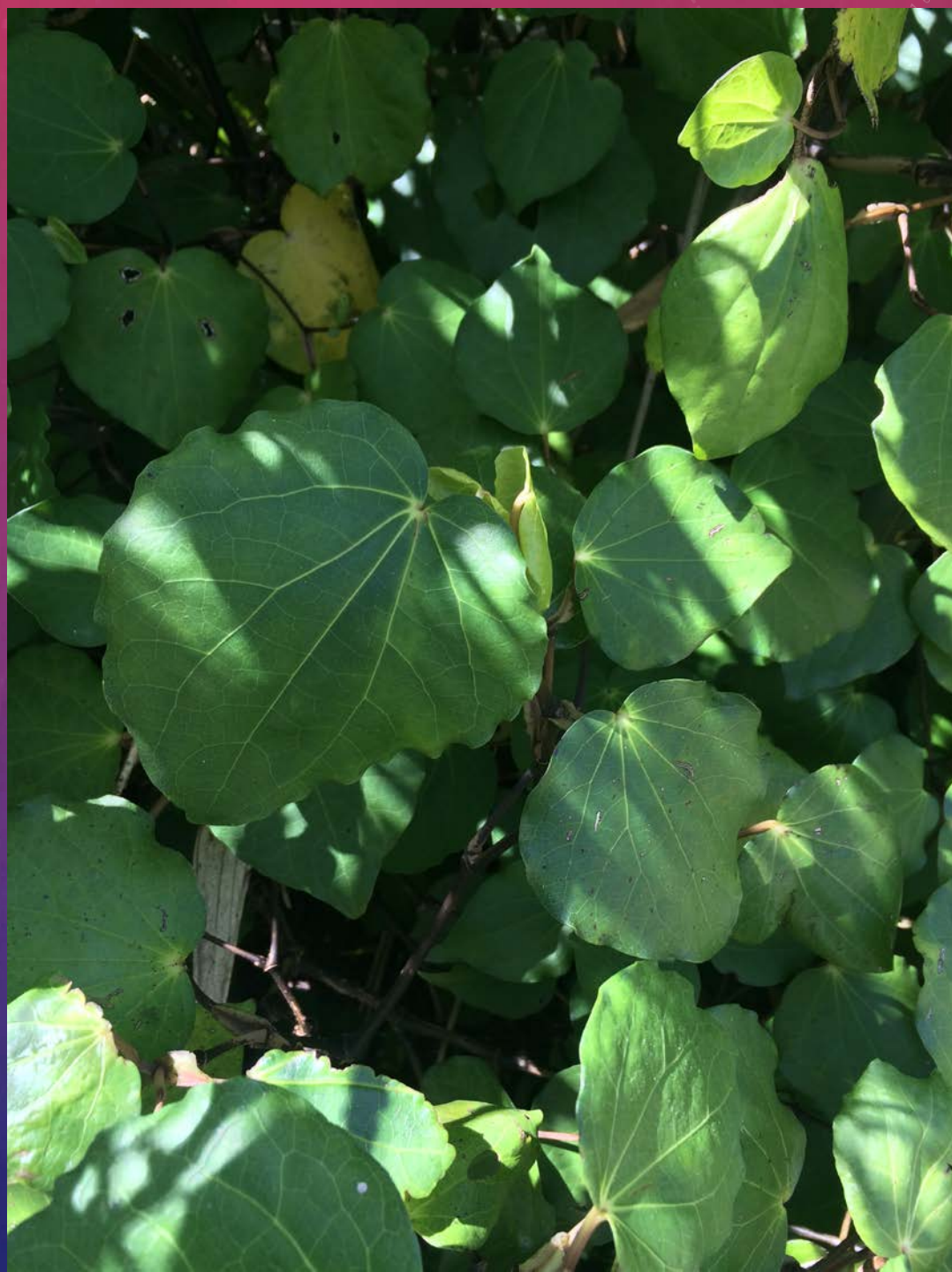
HARAKEKE

- Flax
- *Phormium tenax*



KAWAKAWA

- Pepper tree
- *Macropiper excelsum*




KOROMIKO

- Hebe
- *Hebe salicifolia*





MANUKA

- Tea tree
 - *Leptospermum scoparium*
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FINDINGS

- Majority of western usages of chemicals present do not coincide with their uses in rongoa Maori
- Many chemicals still being investigated
 - New findings could be aligned with rongoa uses
- Discrepancies could easily be attributed to holistic nature of rongoa
 - Rakau is not effective by itself

WHAT'S THE POINT?

This:

- Create connections between western and Maori views of the plants in question
 - Outline both sides to improve communication
- Discuss how Maori and western knowledge can mingle to create a more complete awareness of health

Not that:

- Extract chemicals from native plants for wide scale medicinal use
- Westernize traditional Maori healing
- Teach Pakeha to practice rongoa

PREVIOUS INTERACTIONS

- Tohunga Suppression Act of 1907
 - Repealed in 1962
 - Criminalized use of rongoa Maori if practitioners claimed supernatural abilities
 - Karakia was classified as supernatural power
 - Few prosecutions and convictions
 - 9 convictions between 1910 and 1919
 - One successful prosecution in 1955
 - Forced tohunga underground
 - Stigmatized traditional Maori healing

CURRENT INTERACTIONS

- National body of tohunga
- Contracts with the Ministry of Health
- Medicines Act of 1981

NATIONAL BODY OF MAORI HEALERS

Nga Ringa Whakahaere o te Iwi Maori

- The National Organization of Maori Traditional Practitioners
- Estb. 1992
- Received government funding
 - Despite not being recognized as official national body
- Designed to develop:
 - Standards for the safe and correct practice of rongoa
 - Standards of excellence for training practitioners
 - Policies that will enhance the practice of rongoa

Te Paepae Matua mo te Rongoa

- Estb. 2007
- The official body of Maori healers
- 7 members
 - 1 rep of Nga Ringa Whakahaere
 - Others include tohunga, iwi reps, and administrators
- Accountable to the Ministry of Health
- MoH has supportive role
 - Not an active presence in the collective

CONTRACTS WITH THE MINISTRY

- 1995: MoH began contracting tohunga for health services
 - To be used in conjunction with primary healthcare
- 1999: MoH and Nga Ringa Whakahaere established ethics guide and minimal safety standards
 - Mandatory for contracted tohunga
 - Record keeping, patient rights, referral to other health services, training and supervision of staff, hygienic and tikanga-based gathering and prep of plants for use in herbal remedies
- 2000: Traditional Maori healing services expanded by MoH
 - Contracted more tohunga

MEDICINES ACT OF 1981

- Regulates the prescription of medication in NZ
- Herbal remedies that lack scheduled medicines, make no therapeutic claims, and consist of only plant material and water, ethyl alcohol, or other inert substances are exempt
 - This includes rakau
- If not exempt:
 - Act could potentially damage the correct practice of rongoa or simply refuse the disbursement of rakau
- Almost replaced with the Australian New Zealand Therapeutic Products Authority in 2003
 - Would have put herbal remedies exemption at risk

FUTURE INTERACTIONS

- Demand for increased access to rongoa Maori in mainstream healthcare
 - Many want to receive care from both tohunga and doctors separately
 - Still want Maori healers and doctors to discuss patient health together
- Need to develop policy specifically for rongoa Maori
 - Being exempt from current policy isn't enough
 - Active support

COLLABORATIONS BETWEEN MAORI HEALERS AND DOCTORS

- Focus on treatment plans
 - “Whether the unseen force is called a virus or an infringement of tapu may be less important than the subsequent practical application of measures designed to prevent illness or injury.” –Professor Durie of Massey University, Wai 262 Report
- Western medicine and rongoa Maori are distinct, not clashing
 - Both trying to heal patients in the best way they know

QUESTIONS

- What are your personal interactions with healthcare? What are specific aspects of your experiences that make it successful or unsuccessful? What do you value?
- In your ideal world, what would healthcare look like?

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