



## **Ethnicity, Race and Indigenous Life Expectancy in Aotearoa New Zealand**

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The expectation of indigenous mortality and survival has changed from “smoothing the pillow for the dying native” and now the challenge for New Zealand’s official statistics agencies is to improve the quality of data on indigenous birth, morbidity and death data that has resonance with indigenous New Zealanders. Self-identified ethnicity has replaced the race-based classification system that had its roots in skin colour and a cultural divide in vogue in the 19th century. Understanding today’s challenges to accurate ethnicity coding will change the way we understand indigenous morbidity and life expectancy as we address health issues beyond skin colour and national health priorities.

In this presentation, an indigenous perspective on meaningful ethnicity coding considers factors associated with avoidable cancer mortality for indigenous people to illustrate how understanding indigenous health and demography can also benefit from multi-disciplinary approaches made possible by international collaboration.

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