

# Maori rates of subsequent injury disproportionately high

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Dr Emma Wyeth. Credit: University of Otago

A ground-breaking University of Otago study has found Māori experience disproportionately higher rates of subsequent injuries within two years of their initial injury.

Dr. Emma Wyeth, a senior lecturer and director of the Ngāi Tahu Māori Health Research Unit in the Department of Preventive and Social Medicine, is the lead author of *Subsequent injuries experienced by Māori*, which features in the latest edition of the *New Zealand Medical Journal* released this morning.

The paper is the first study of its kind to investigate subsequent injuries for Māori that have been reported to the Accident Compensation Commission (ACC) over a two-year period. A subsequent injury is one that occurs after, but not necessarily because of, an earlier injury.

Data was sourced from the Subsequent Injury Study (led by Professor Sarah Derrett and Dr. Helen Harcombe), which included participant interviews, and ACC and hospital discharge information.

In total, 566 Māori participants took part in the study. Of that cohort, 42 percent had at least one subsequent injury reported to ACC within a year of an earlier injury, and 62 percent within two years.

"This suggests that the subsequent injury burden for Māori is considerable, and that preventive opportunities are potentially being missed," Dr. Wyeth says.

The most common type of subsequent injuries experienced were spine dislocations, sprains or strains. Those with moderate or high alcohol use or cognitive difficulties before the earlier injury were more likely to experience subsequent injuries.

Dr. Wyeth says the findings illustrate the complexity of post-injury pathways.

"The burden is considerable, therefore more emphasis needs to be placed on understanding the pathways after injury and strategies for

prevention, specifically of subsequent injuries for Māori."

Additional analyses are underway to investigate factors that protect Māori from, or contribute to subsequent injuries.

This information will be used to identify potential areas for increased focus and support to improve Māori [injury](#) outcomes, aiming to reduce the burden of subsequent injuries.

Provided by University of Otago

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