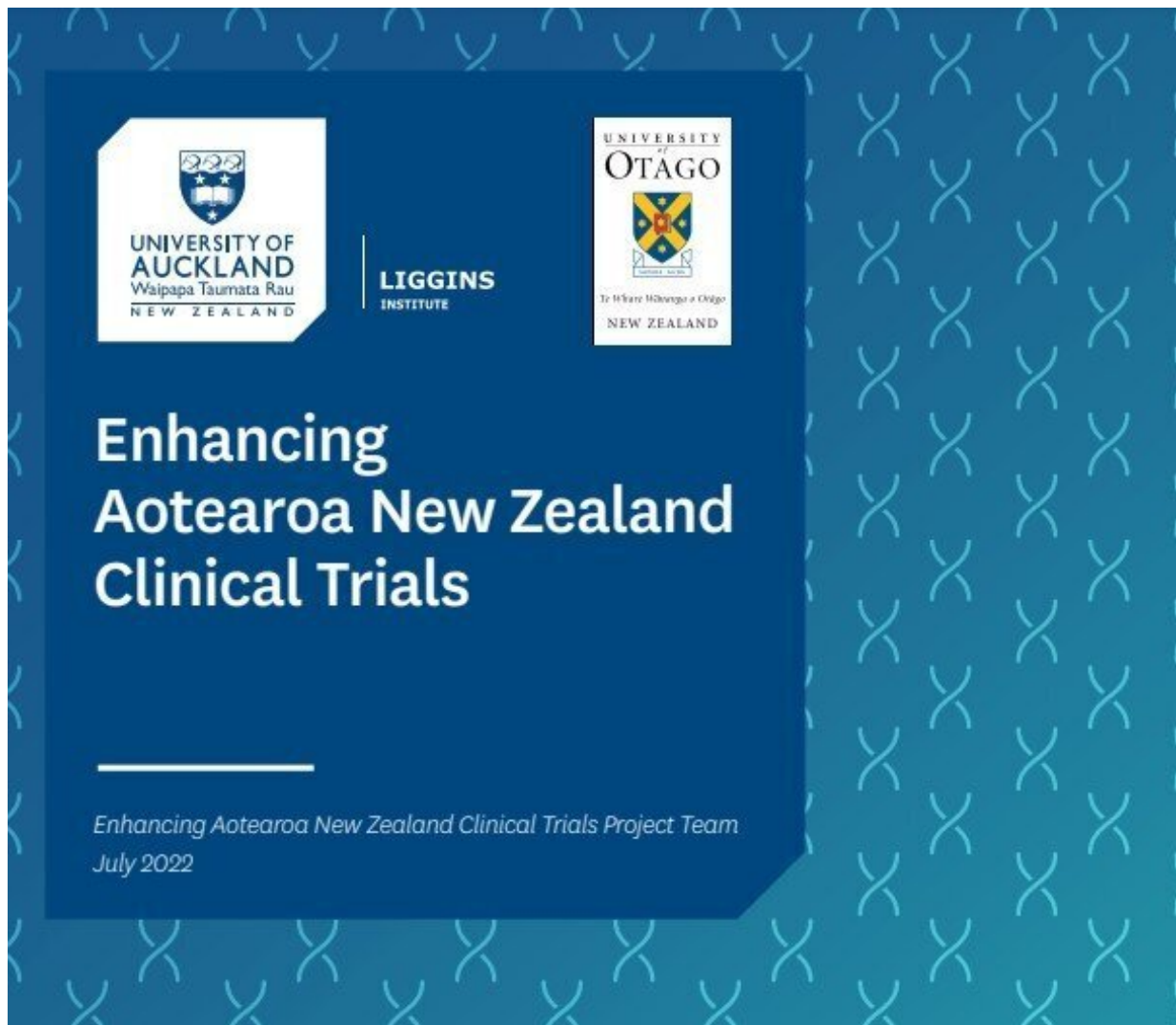


NZ scientists propose system redesign to improve access to clinical trials

December 14 2022



Credit: University of Auckland/Liggins Institute/University of Otago

Ensuring that the latest clinical research opportunities, and the health care benefits that flow from them, are available to all New Zealanders is at the heart of a new report.

[Enhancing Aotearoa New Zealand Clinical Trials](#)

[is the result of 18 months of work by the team of researchers.](#)

[Professor Frank Bloomfield, director of the University of Auckland's Liggins Institute says there is inequitable access to clinical trials around New Zealand.](#)

["In particular, Māori, Pacific and rural New Zealanders are more frequently missing out both on participating in clinical trials and on their benefits," Professor Bloomfield says.](#)

["Outside of large research groups or large, research-intensive hospitals, of which there are not many, there is limited capacity or resource to support clinical trials taking place or even participation in, for example, a larger national or international trial."](#)

[The report proposes establishing a new National Clinical Trials Infrastructure Center that would provide a "front door" for anyone planning a clinical trial, as well as executive leadership, in partnership with Māori and consumers.](#)

[New regional Clinical Trials Co-ordinating Centers would support local trial development and conduct to ensure equity of access for researchers and participants.](#)

[Professor Lisa Stamp, of the University of Otago, Christchurch, explains that clinical trials are a central element of a modern, high-functioning](#)

[health](#) system. Clinical trials can provide access to novel treatments for patients and deliver cutting-edge health care.

"Not only would a national clinical trials model give patients access to trials, but international evidence is clear that patients involved in clinical trials do better health wise—their health will benefit," Professor Stamp says.

"The newly emerging structure for the New Zealand health system as a whole represents an opportunity to embed research into the heart of our health services developing a learning health system that works to the highest level for the benefit of people in Aotearoa."

Dr. Matire Harwood, head of the department of General Practice at the University of Auckland, says that a particular issue identified through questionnaires, research and hui leading up to the report is a need to develop the Māori and Pacific research workforce, and support research led by Māori and Pacific providers.

"As well as partnering with Māori and Pacific communities, we need to upskill our tauwi researchers to conduct culturally responsive and safe trials," Dr. Harwood says.

The report also calls for a national health data system that provides culturally appropriate long-term storage of data and [tissue samples](#), and supports translation of research findings into clinical care.

Professor Stamp says, with the right investment, there is potential to recognize the unique contribution of Māori and Pacific mātauranga to [clinical research](#), while also developing our [international reputation](#) for excellence in [clinical trials](#).

Professors Bloomfield and Stamp co-led the report together with

Associate Professor Matire Harwood (Ngāpuhi) and Professor Stuart Dalziel, both of the University of Auckland, and Professor Katrina Sharples, of the University of Otago.

Provided by University of Otago

Citation: NZ scientists propose system redesign to improve access to clinical trials (2022, December 14) retrieved 12 September 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-12-nz-scientists-redesign-access-clinical.html>

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