

## **Practice based evidence: The source of innovation**

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Rising to the challenge of the evidence-based environment has been a difficult task for a number of alternative or complementary healing practices including traditional Maori healing. Research to determine the efficacy of specific components within an intervention is generally considered inappropriate on either cultural or philosophical grounds and this presents a significant barrier to the integration of these services into the health system. One approach to this issue is to focus on the outcome of the entire intervention rather than the efficacy of particular techniques and this has been the basis of a current research project 'Nga Tohu o te Ora: Traditional Maori Wellness Outcome Measures'. Traditional Maori healers are engaging in research to gather evidence to support the practices and services they offer. At the same time they are also developing networks that shift the nature of their professional practice from that of individual practitioners to a collective body. This provides a window to observe the emergence of a profession and the opportunity to contrast the characteristics of research and practice in this area with those of more established professions like physiotherapy. This paper will explore the role of research and innovation in an evidence based environment and the implications for practice, the setting of professional standards, and interdisciplinary knowledge transfer.