

DOCTORS TEACHING DOCTORS MĀORI LANGUAGE

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Background

Few doctors use Māori language (Te Reo) in their daily practice. This is true even at Rotorua Hospital, where 40% of patients are Māori. The number of doctors who can teach Te Reo is increasing, creating opportunities for doctors to learn the language from other doctors, including learning in scheduled education sessions. We aimed to assess the attitudes of doctors and medical students towards the use of Te Reo in clinical practice and to find out what value they placed on Te Reo education sessions delivered in their hospital departments.

Methods

Medical students and doctors who had been working or training in hospital departments where regular Te Reo teaching sessions had been occurring over a period of 12 months or more were invited to complete an online survey.

Results

Fifty-nine participants responded to the survey. Eighty-nine per cent rated the sessions enjoyable or very enjoyable. Two people rated them as unpleasant. Ninety-six percent graded the sessions as very valuable or somewhat valuable. Eighty-nine percent agreed or strongly agreed that the ability to use Te Reo in clinical practice is important for doctors. Seventy-one per cent identified low confidence or low skill as a reason for not using Te Reo more often, but other reasons included feelings of tokenism and fear of judgement from other clinicians.

Conclusion

Frequent, regular education sessions not only provide doctors with language skills they can use with patients but also promote Te Reo as a normal part of daily life for doctors. We identify barriers to the use of and to the teaching of Te Reo in New Zealand hospitals. We describe an effective model for doctors teaching other doctors Te Reo.