

(Re)Conceptualising mental health and wellbeing in the Pacific: A Cook Islands case study

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Mental health across the Pacific

Limited data on prevalence of mental health problems

Limited data on wellbeing

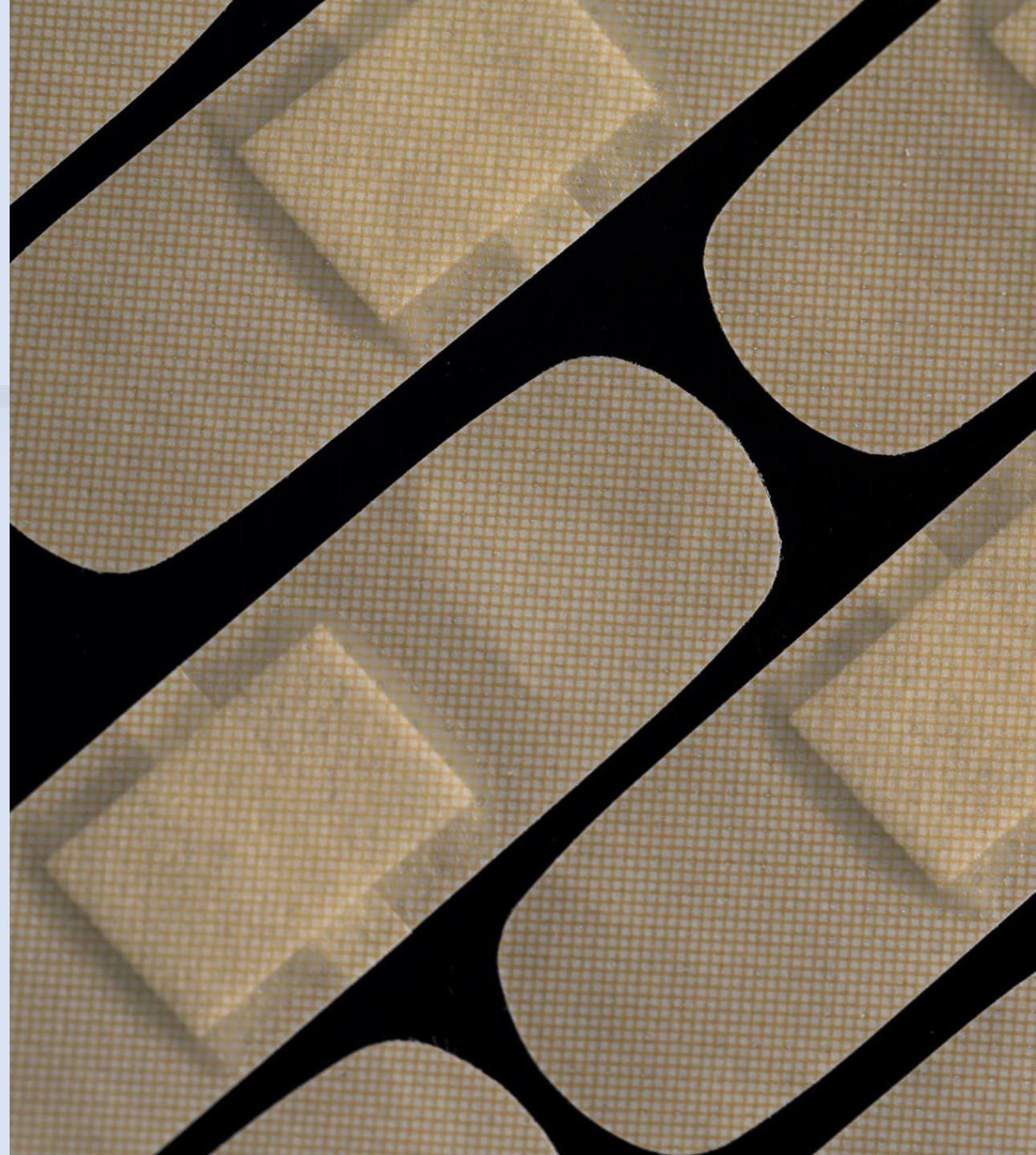
Service provision limited

Stigma

Cultural beliefs and explanations

Eurocentric framings of mental illness, health, and wellbeing

- Emphasis on biomedical explanations to mental health problems.
- Cultural influences and beliefs may require cultural approaches for treatment.
- Psycho-social-cultural explanations require deeper investigations to sit alongside biomedical approaches.



Eurocentric biases within existing mental health measures

- Extant measures of mental health problems are based on Eurocentric understandings and not developed with Pacific contexts.
- Cross-cultural validity recognises psychometric properties, but severely limited for Pacific populations.
- How does a focus on mental health problems align with Pacific concepts of mental health?

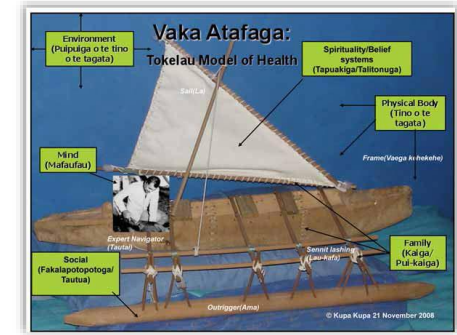




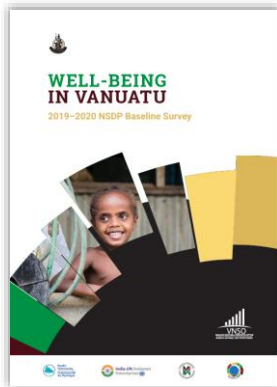
Ministry for Pacific Peoples (2022)



Tuitahi (2009)



Kupa (2009)



Vanuatu National Statistics Office (2021)

Pacific health and wellbeing

- Holistic | Interconnected dimensions
- Emphasise unique cultural contexts
- Common elements:
 - Family, Land, Environment, Culture, Spirituality, Language, Physical, Mental, Social, Context, Time



Pulotu-Endemann (1995)

How can we design large scale mental health research that integrates Pacific and psychological knowledge and methods?



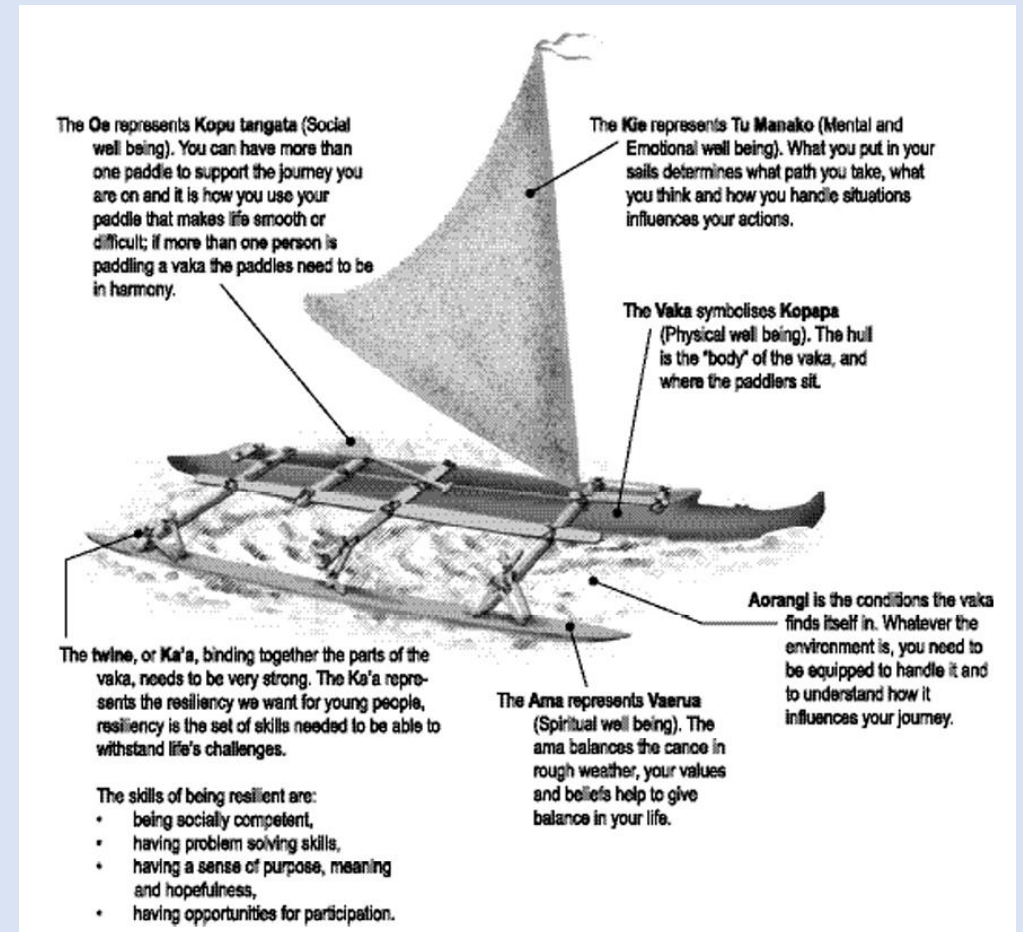
Te 'Ākirāta Mārama – Mental health in the Cook Islands



Connecting Cook
Island concepts
with large scale
mental health
research

Pito 'enua Cook Island wellbeing

- Kopapa – Physical Wellbeing
- Tu Manako – Mental and emotional wellbeing
- Vaerua – Spiritual wellbeing
- Kopu tangata – Social wellbeing
- Aorangi – Total environment



Cook Islands mental health

- No national level data on general population
- Stigma around mental health problems
- Increase in patient services between 2019-2020
- Growing mental health team and service provision
- Growing awareness of mental health issues and approaches to combat stigma

Figure 13: Number and proportion of mental and behavioural disorders, 2019-2020

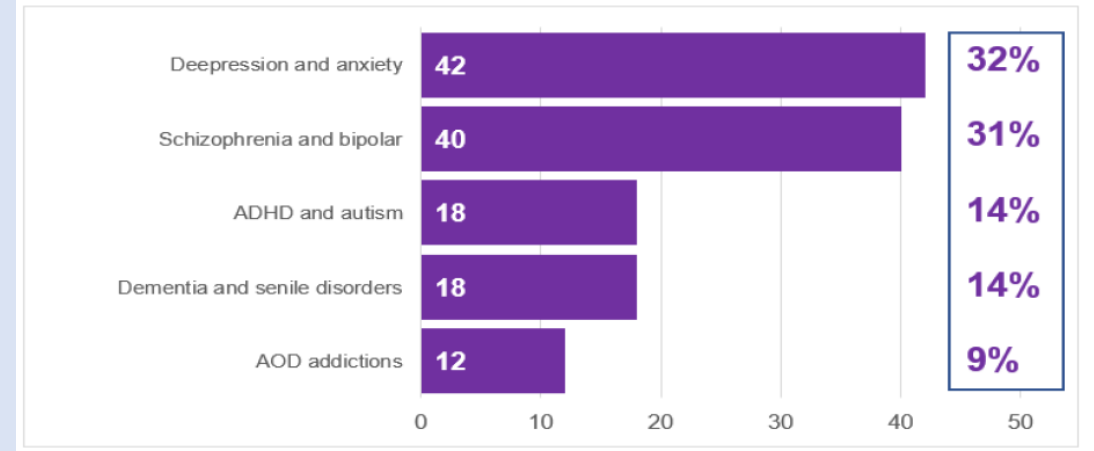
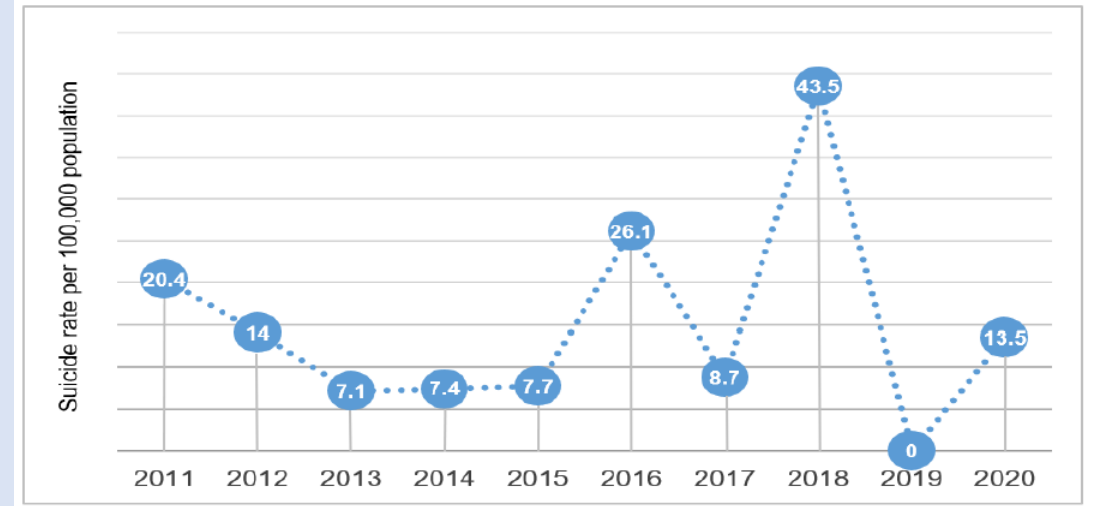


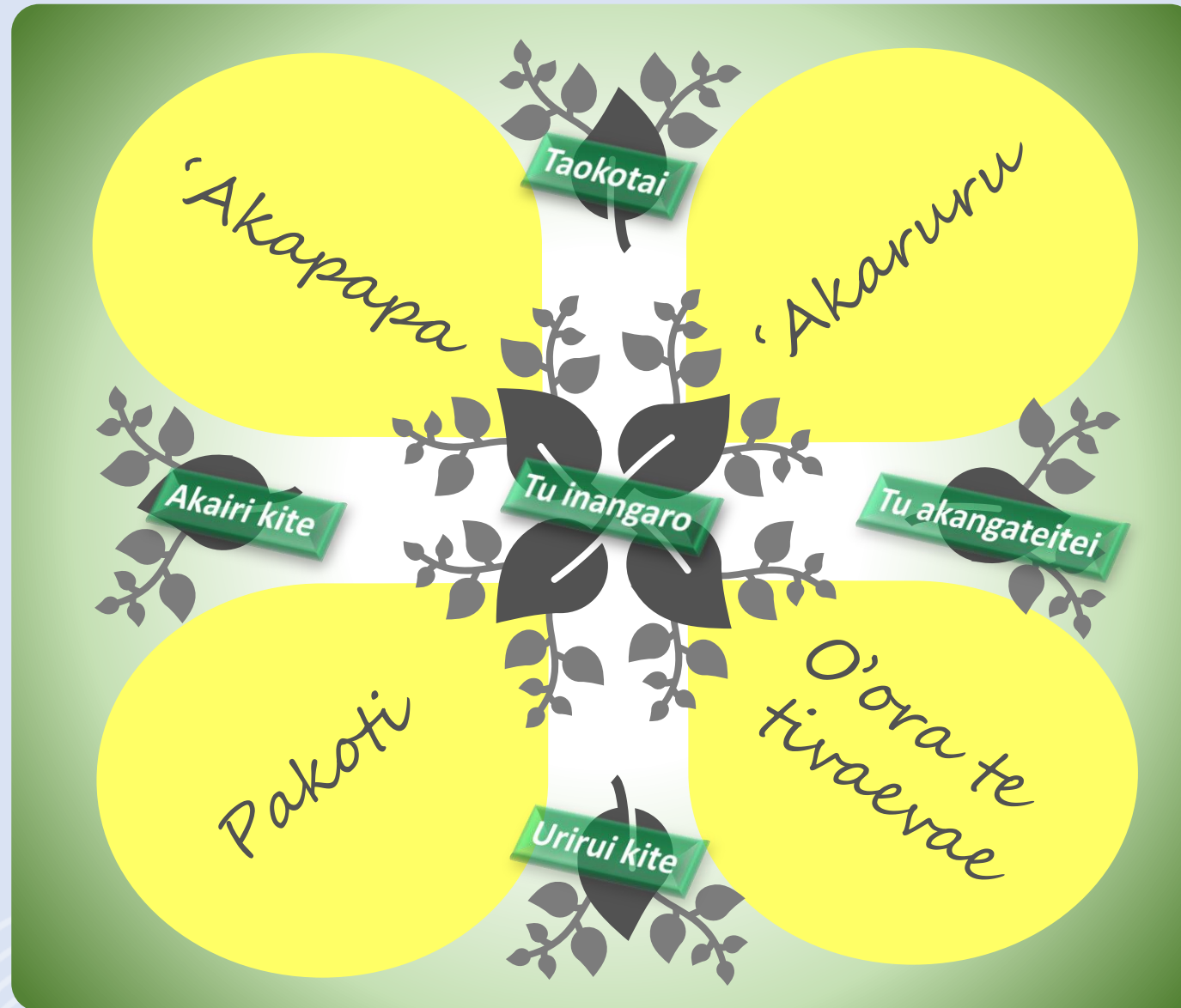
Figure 14: Suicide rate per 100,000 Cook Islands, 2011-2020



Tivaevae

Planning and
Conceptualising

Methods and
Data collection



Analyses and
Interpretation

Findings and
Sharing

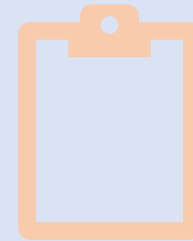


'Akapapa

Planning and conceptualising

Aims

- Describe the 1 month, 6 month, 12 month, and lifetime prevalence of Anxiety and Depression among people living in Rarotonga and Aitutaki (aged 16 years and older)
- **Describe the prevalence of symptoms for anxiety, depression, psychological distress, and harmful alcohol consumption in the general Cook Is population.**
- Provide baseline data for the mental health status of the Cook Islands
- Calibrate instruments for a Cook Islands population.



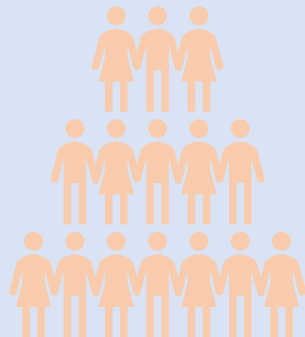
Study Design

- Observational, cross-sectional, survey
- Rarotonga and Aitutaki (at this stage)
- Sample size, n=1086

Participants

Resident population of Rarotonga and Aitutaki aged 16 or over

- Inclusion: Citizen, Permanent Resident, Work permit/Visitor intending to stay for the next 12 months
- Exclusion: Residing in hospital, prison, or care facility





Akaruru

Methods and collection

Measures in the survey

- Used with Pacific populations in NZ
- Used in Cook Islands
- Broader view of mental health
- English with verbal translation assistance*



PHQ-8
Depression



AUDIT
Alcohol



WGSS
Functioning



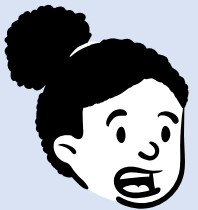
GAD-7
Anxiety



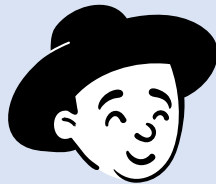
MEIM-R
Ethnic Identity



Mental health
history



K-10
Distress



PWI
Wellbeing



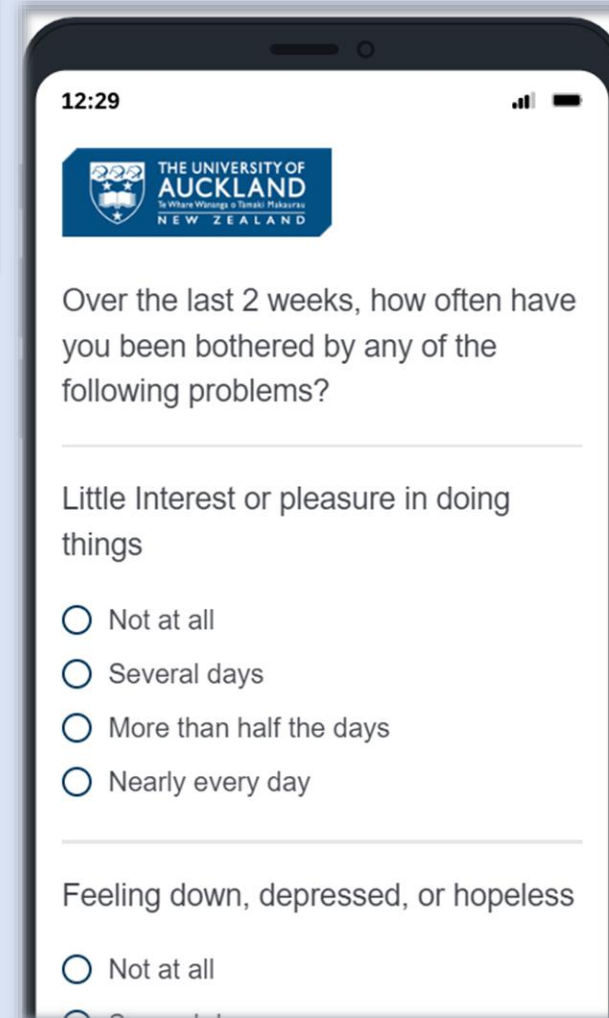
Demographics



'Akaruru

Methods and collection

- Trained interviewers
 - Protocol and processes
 - Fluent in Māori
- Random sampling: Covid-19 restrictions
 - Random household in allocated village
 - Person in household who has next birthday
- Face-to-face interview with tablet, or participant self-complete
- \$10 Vodafone voucher koha





Pakoti

Analyses & Interpretation

Demographics

Age	Male	Female	TOTAL	Age	Diverse*
16-24	118	145	263	16-34	>5
25-34	121	168	289	35+	>5
35-44	87	111	198		
45-54	78	100	178		
55-64	70	70	140		
65-74	29	27	56		
75+	10	12	22		
Total	513	633	1146		>10

*Includes Akava'ine, transgender, non-binary. Numbers below 5 suppressed.

Ethnicity**	Total
Cook Is Māori	1053
European	95
NZ Māori	63
Samoan	27
Tongan	>10
Fiji	31
Other Pacific	27
Asian	42
Other	<10

**Total Response. Numbers below 10 suppressed

Sexuality	Total
Heterosexual	1033
Lesbian/Gay	29
Bi/Pan/Asexual	26
Outside scope/Did not answer	83

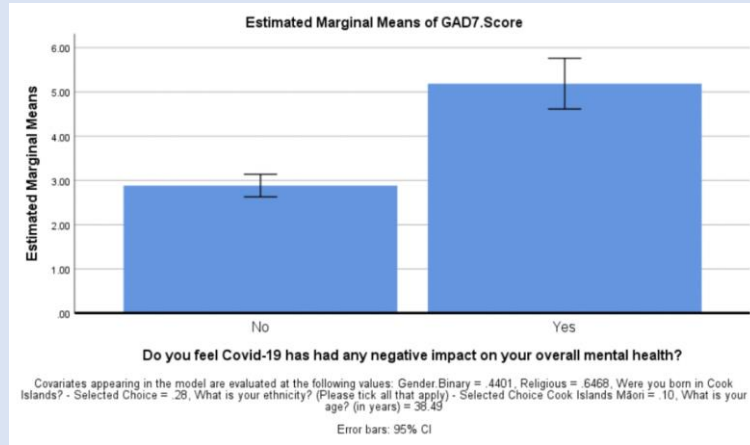
Estimated Population Proportions

PHQ-8			GAD-7			K-10		
Minimal	78.4%	(74.8%-81.6%)	Minimal	72.4%	(69.2%-75.4%)	Low	81.6%	(78.5%-84.3%)
Mild	16.0%	(13.6%-18.7%)	Mild	20.0%	(17.5%-22.7%)	Moderate	12.3%	(10.6%-14.3%)
Moderate	3.7%	(2.6%-5.3%)	Moderate	5.5%	(4.4%-6.9%)	High	4.7%	(3.5%-6.3%)
Mod-Sev	1.7%	(1.0%-2.9%)	Severe	2.2%	(1.4%-3.4%)	Very High	1.4%	(0.8%-2.3%)
Severe	0.2%	(0.1%-0.6%)						

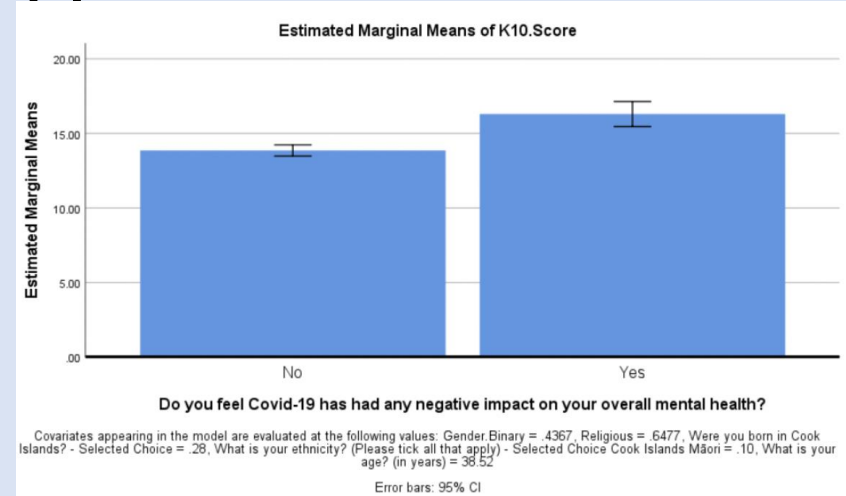
K-10 (Pacific Sample of NZ Health Survey 21/22)		
Low	63.3%	(53.6%-72.2%)
Moderate	22.3%	(15.4%-30.6%)
High	8.3%	(4.7%-13.4%)
Very High	6.1%*	(2.2%-13.0%)*

Influence of Covid-19 on mental health and wellbeing

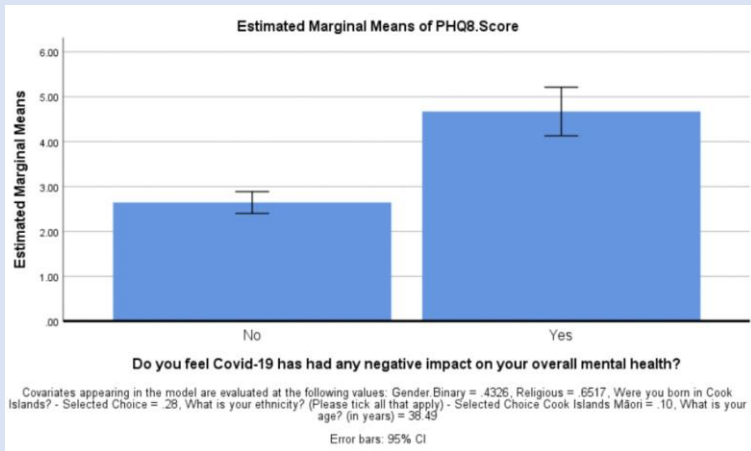
GAD7



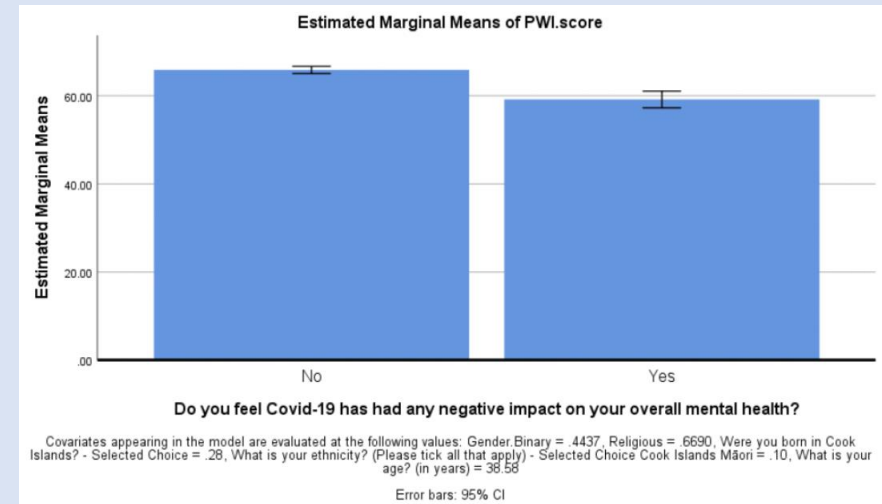
K10



PHQ8

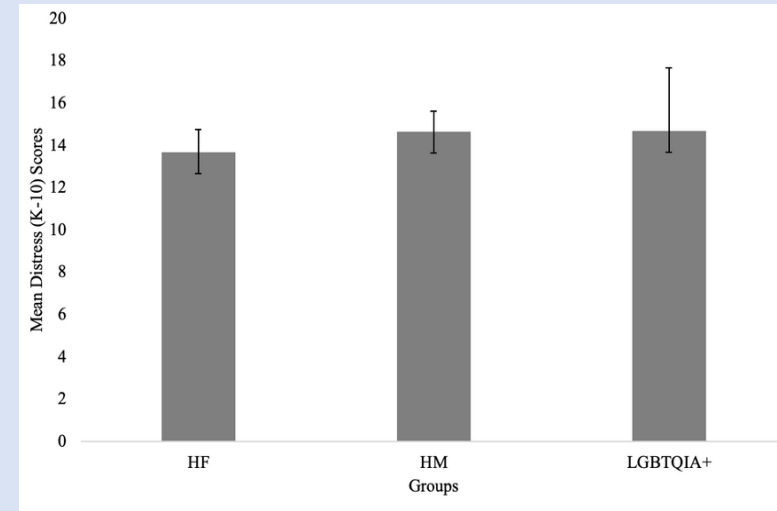
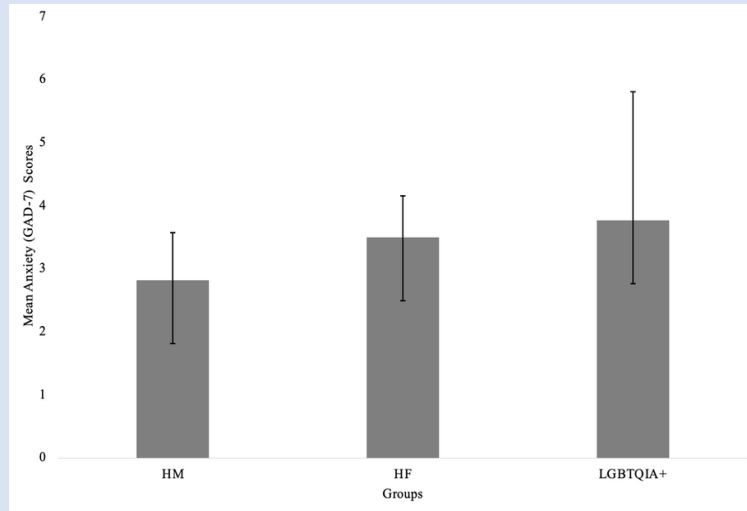


PWI



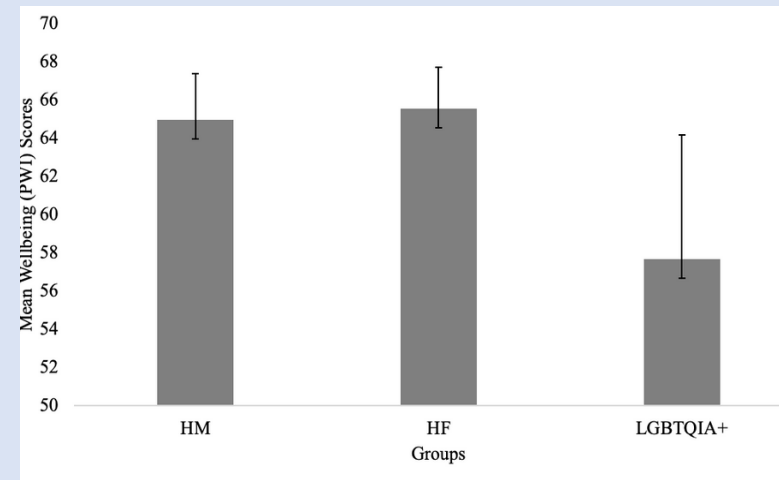
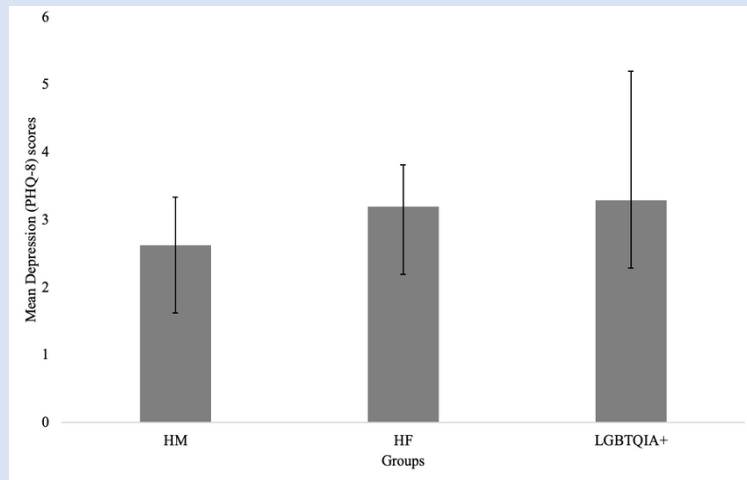
Mental health and wellbeing across heterosexual and LGBTQIA+ Akava'ine

GAD-7



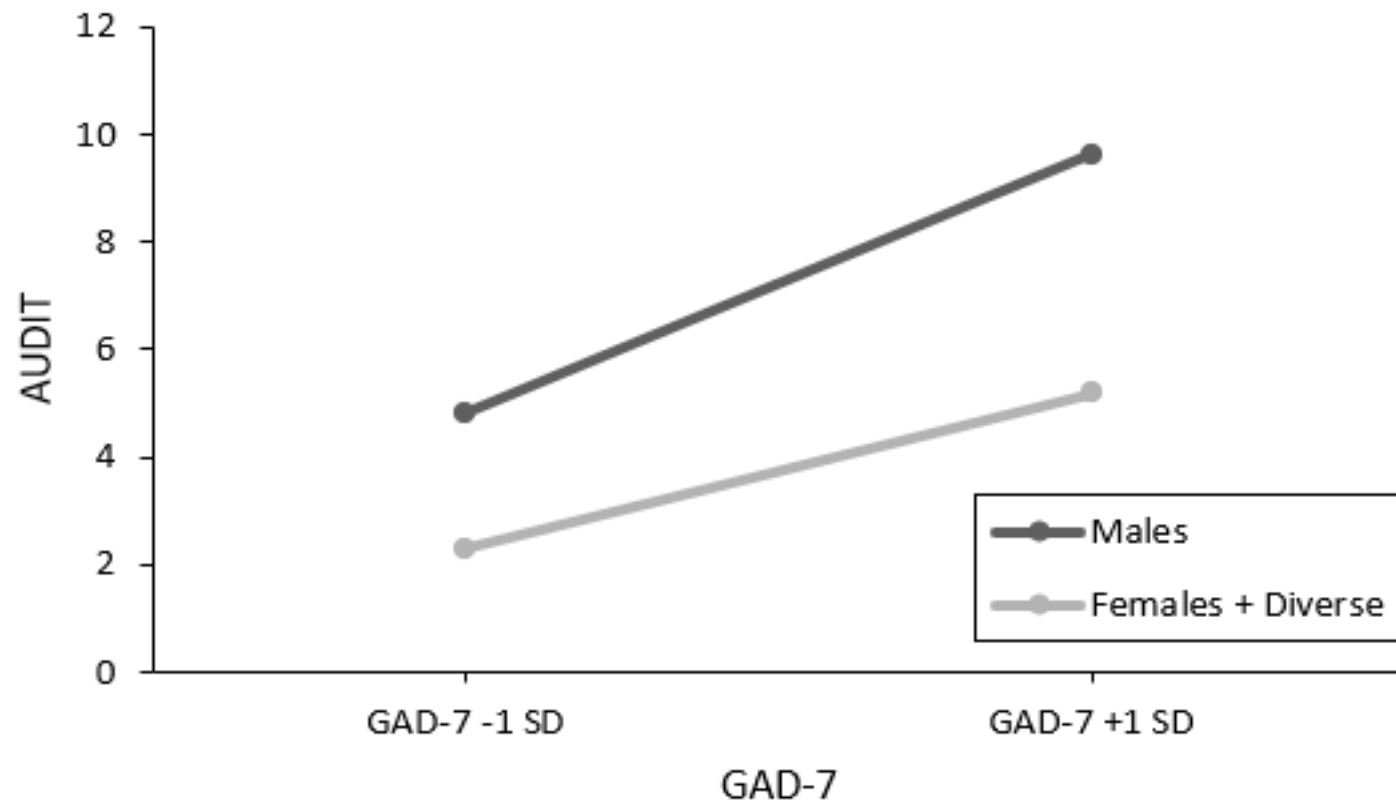
K-10

PHQ-8



PWI

Relationship Between AUDIT and GAD-7 Moderated by Gender





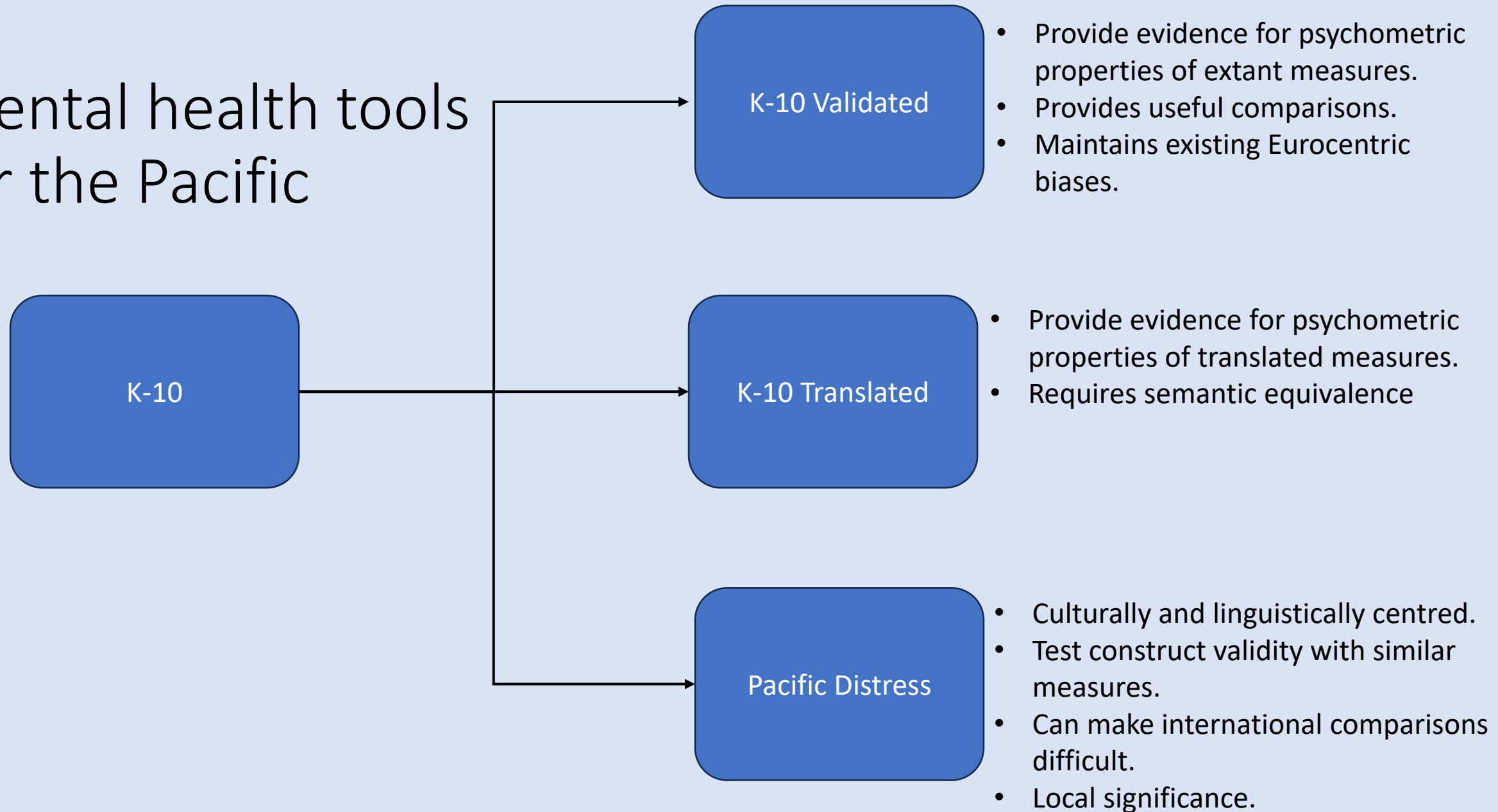
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Analyses & Interpretation

General patterns show:

- Higher scores for younger age groups, females and gender diverse, and Rarotonga
- High proportion of the population are doing well
- Negative influence of Covid-19
- Differences in wellbeing for gender and sexual diverse
- Difference in gender in association between anxiety and alcohol use

Mental health tools for the Pacific

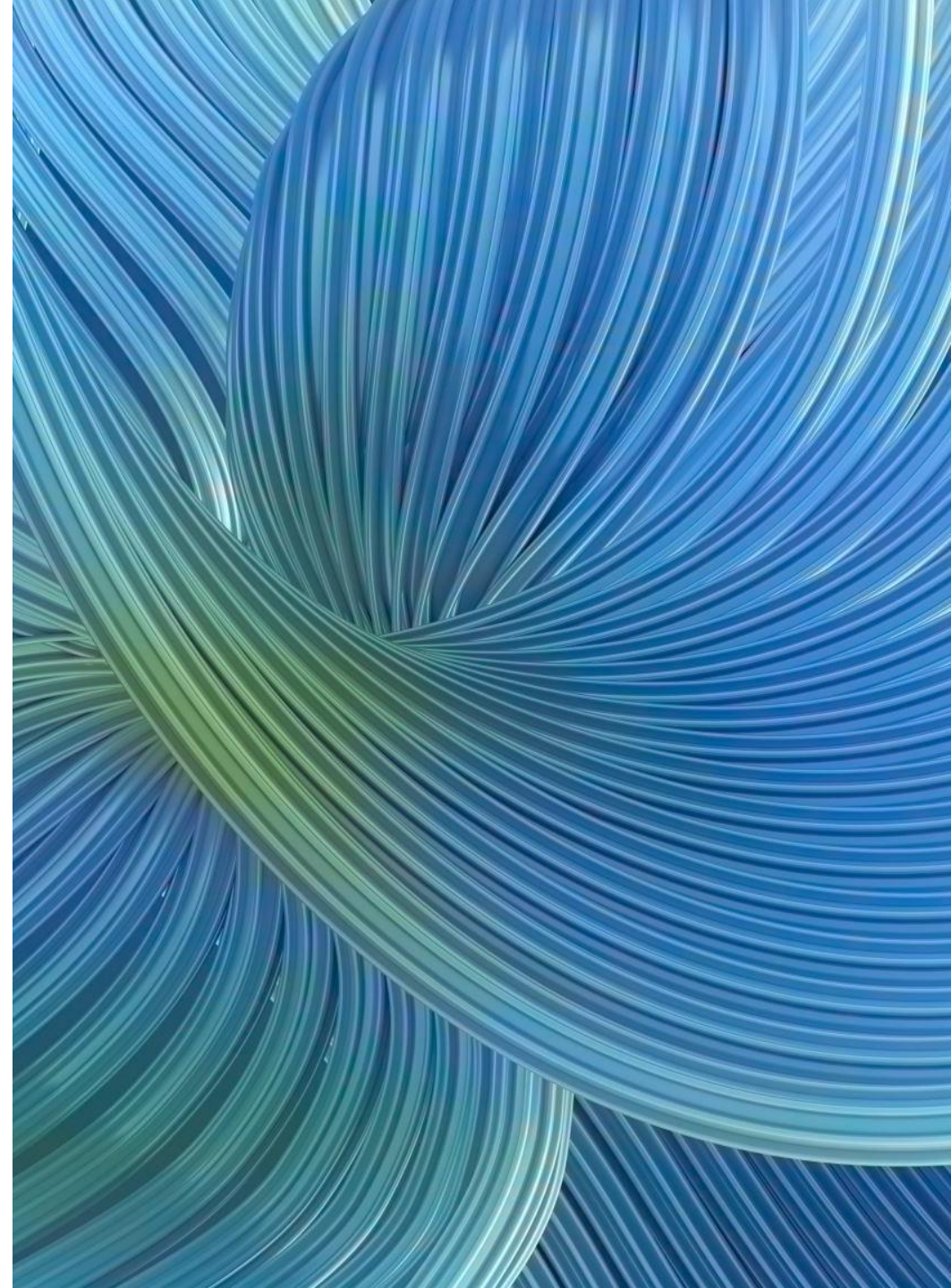


Limitations and Discussions

- Existing measures may be limited in capturing cultural nuance in experiences with mental health problems.
- Pair with measures beyond mental health problems to parallel holistic health and wellbeing concepts.
- Pacific researchers with local knowledge *and* expertise to develop, analyse, and interpret within context.
- Emphasis on quality data collection to identify demographic patterns, target resources, enhance services and workforce.
- Indigenous and Western knowledge and methods in parallel



Future Directions





Acknowledgements

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Meitaki maata to University of the South Pacific Cook Islands and Te Puna Vai Marama for their administrative and logistical support

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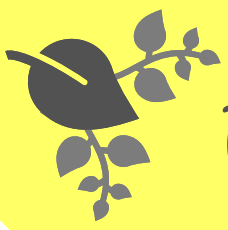
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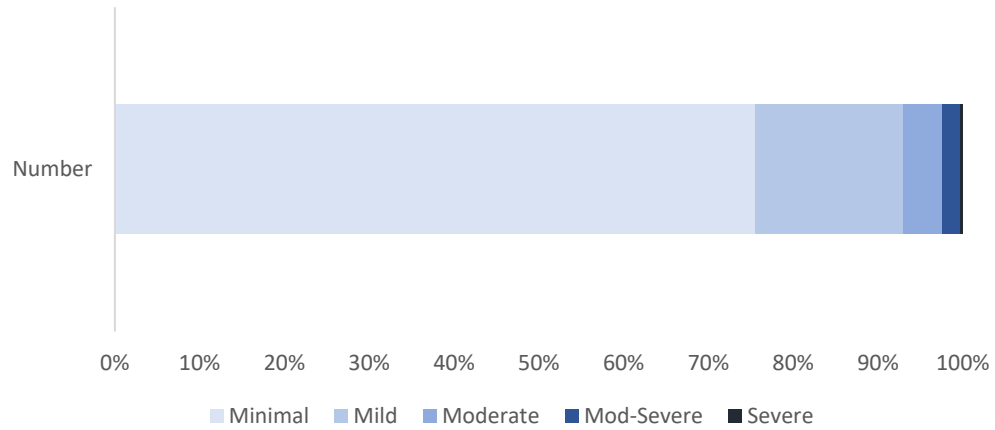
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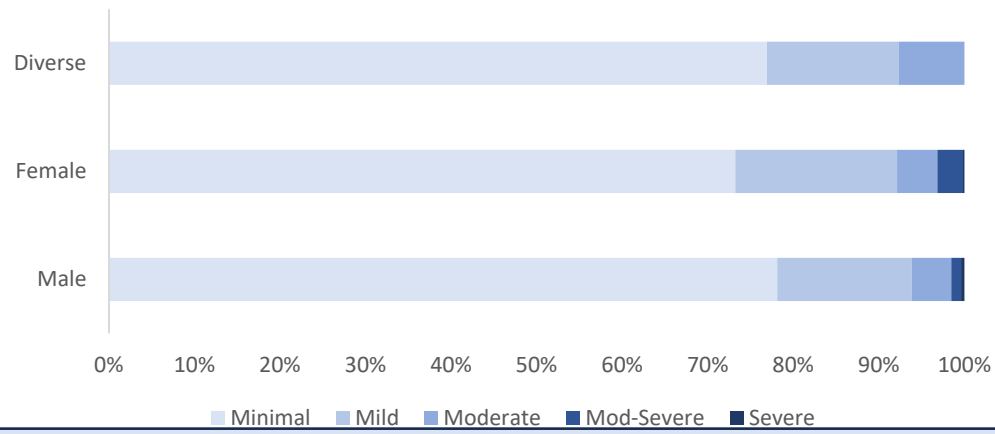
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Analyses & Interpretation

Total Sample

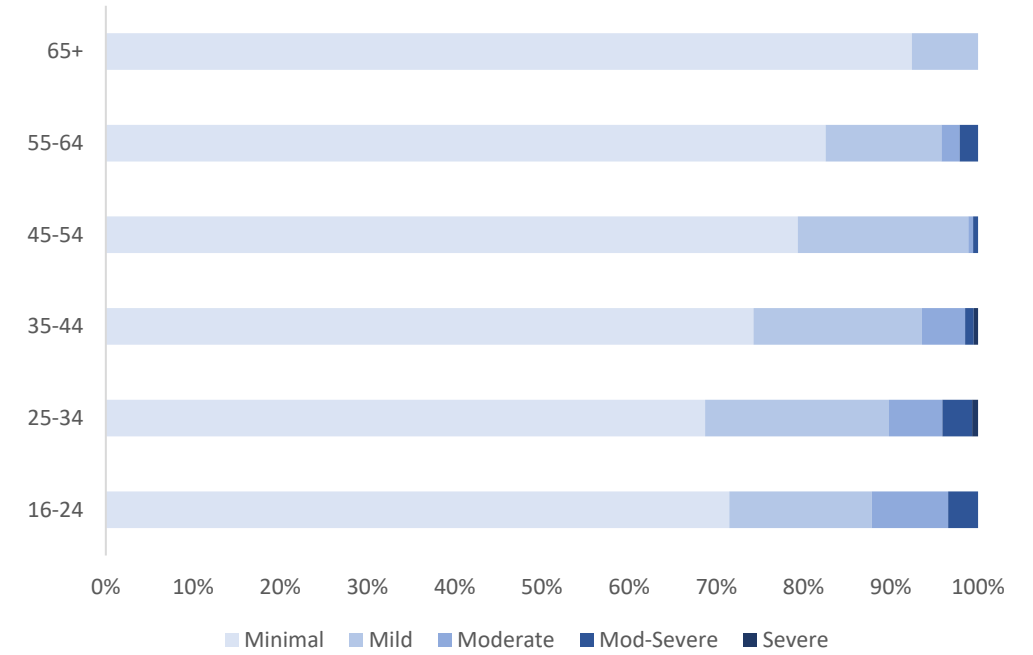


Gender

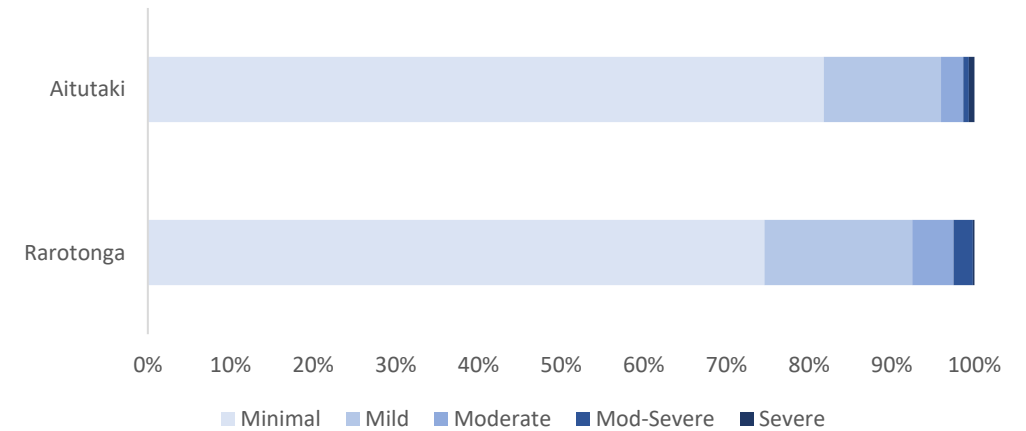


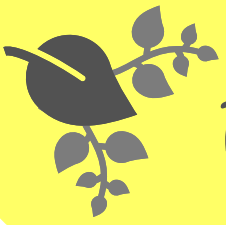
PHQ-8 Scores - Unweighted Analyses

Age Group



Island



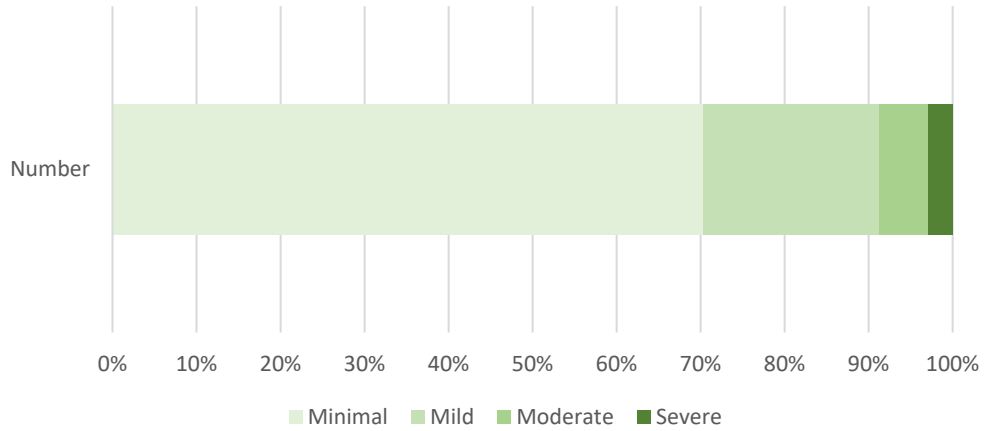


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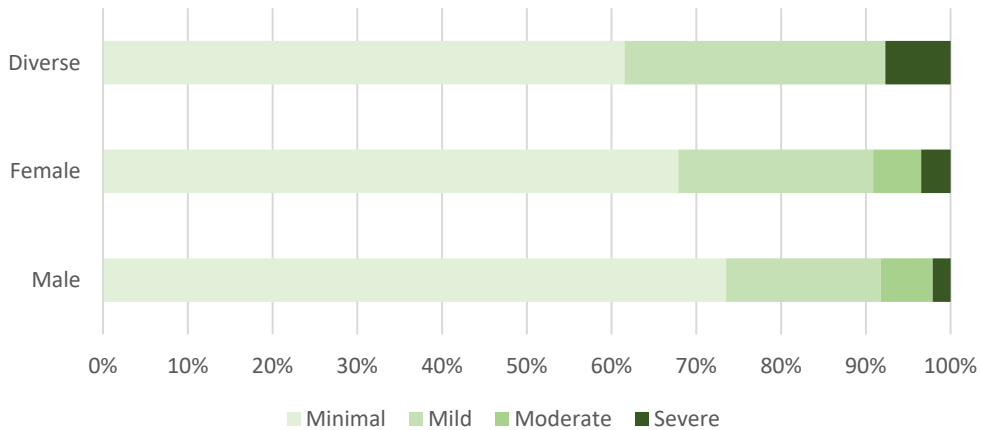
Analyses & Interpretation

- GAD-7 Scores
- Unweighted Analyses

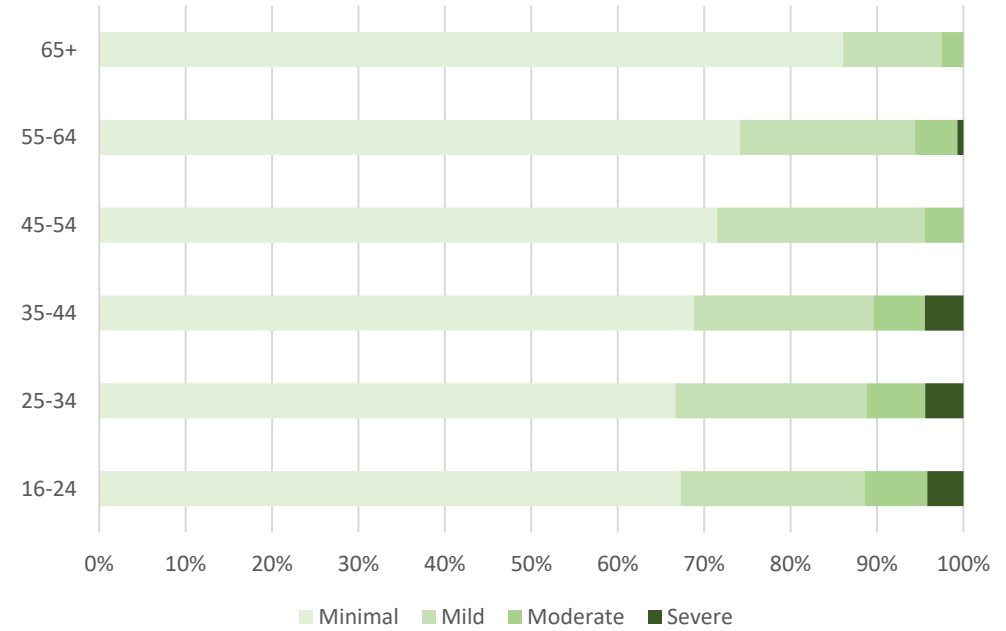
Total



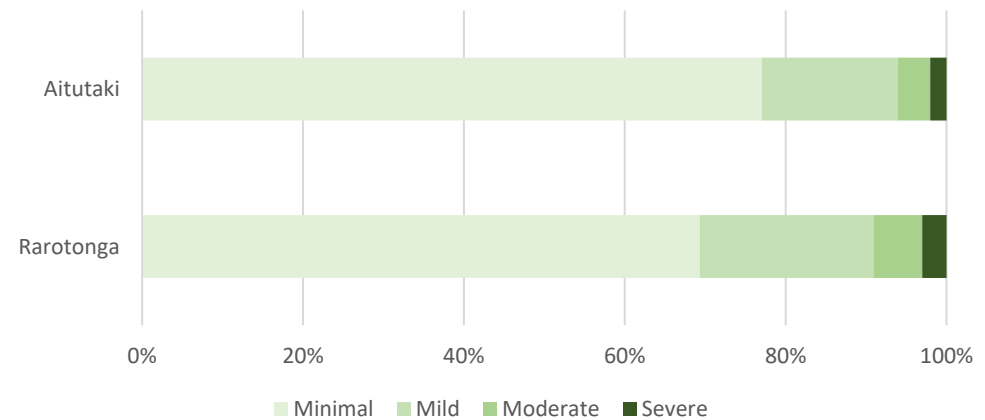
Gender



Age Group



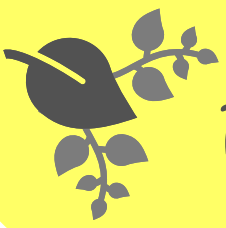
Island



GAD-7 Estimated Population Proportions

	Minimal	Mild	Moderate	Severe
Total	0.7242	0.1996	0.0547	0.0215
	[0.6920,0.7543]	[0.1749,0.2269]	[0.0435,0.0686]	[0.0135,0.0340]
AGE				
16-24	0.6853	0.2102	0.0686	0.036
	[0.6038,0.7567]	[0.1518,0.2836]	[0.0559,0.0839]	[0.0171,0.0740]
25-34	0.6732	0.2151	0.0692	0.0425
	[0.6252,0.7179]	[0.1650,0.2754]	[0.0526,0.0905]	[0.0248,0.0719]
35-44	0.6957	0.2029	0.0598	0.0415
	[0.6440,0.7429]	[0.1665,0.2450]	[0.0429,0.0828]	[0.0259,0.0659]
45-54	0.7276	0.225	0.0474	0
	[0.6695,0.7789]	[0.1657,0.2980]	[0.0281,0.0789]	
55-64	0.7412	0.2017	0.0514	0.0058
	[0.7050,0.7743]	[0.1641,0.2454]	[0.0335,0.0780]	[0.0011,0.0307]
65+	0.8396	0.1322	0.0282	0
	[0.7275,0.9112]	[0.0689,0.2387]	[0.0036,0.1870]	

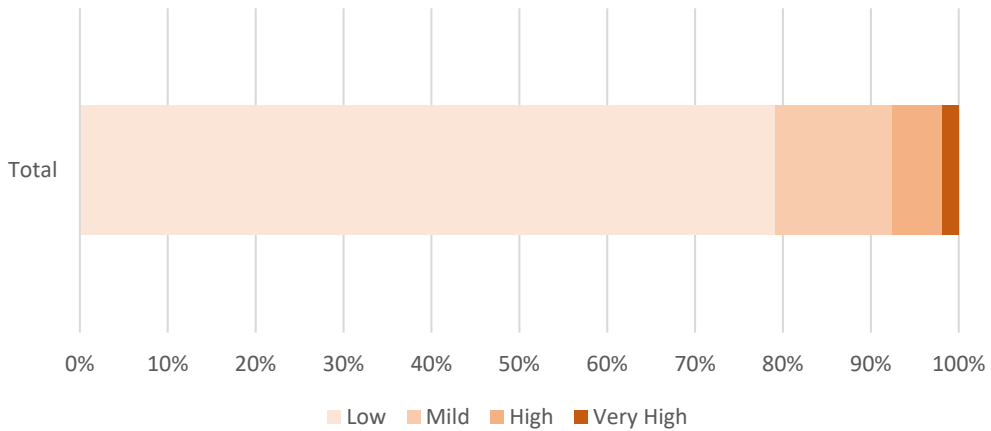
	Minimal	Mild	Moderate	Severe
GENDER				
Male	0.7422	0.1833	0.0591	0.0154
	[0.7035,0.7774]	[0.1530,0.2181]	[0.0407,0.0851]	[0.0068,0.0347]
Female	0.7098	0.2129	0.0516	0.0257
	[0.6603,0.7548]	[0.1776,0.2531]	[0.0399,0.0665]	[0.0141,0.0462]
Diverse	0.5931	0.3063	0	0.1006
	[0.3408,0.8043]	[0.1346,0.5563]	[0.0118,0.5125]	
Location				
Rarotonga	0.7088	0.2107	0.0577	0.0228
	[0.6751,0.7402]	[0.1845,0.2396]	[0.0455,0.0731]	[0.0140,0.0368]
Aitutaki	0.8243	0.1277	0.0351	0.013
	[0.7490,0.8806]	[0.0816,0.1944]	[0.0166,0.0727]	[0.0030,0.0547]



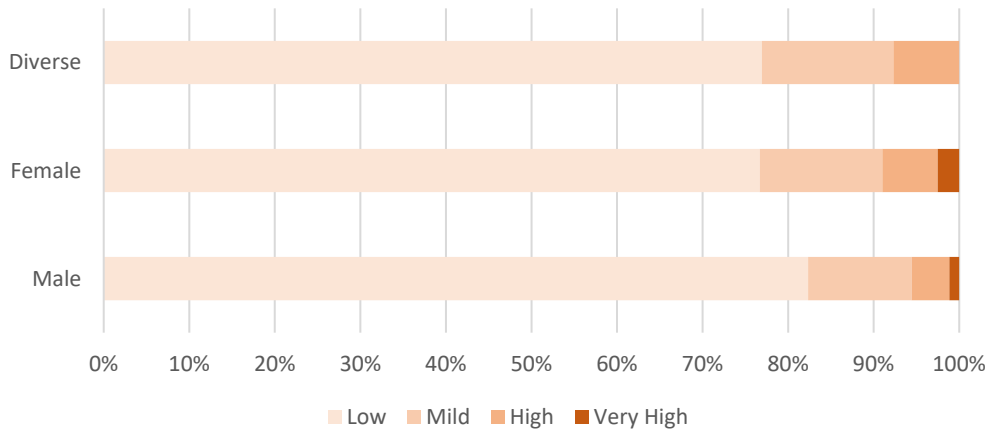
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Analyses & Interpretation

Total

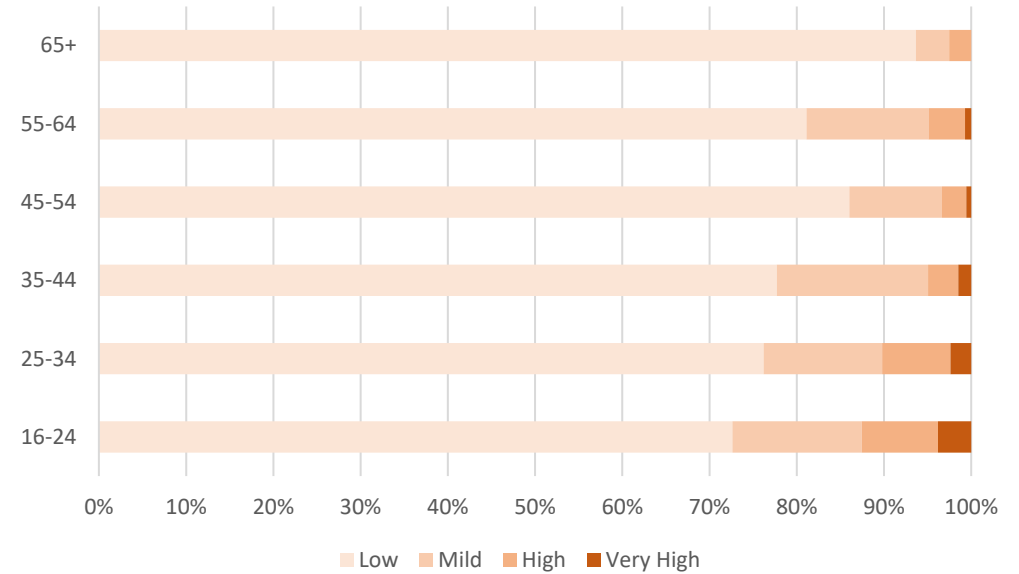


Gender

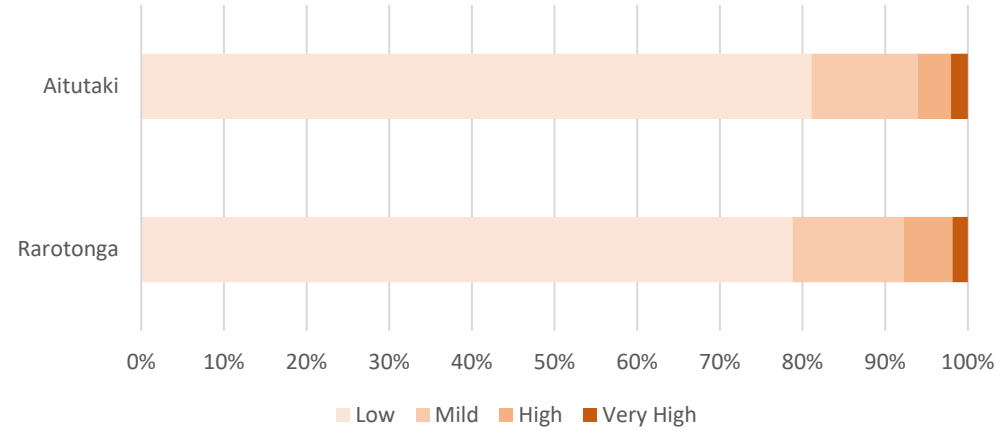


K10 Scores Unweighted Analyses

Age



Island



K-10 Estimated Population Proportion

	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Total	0.816	0.123	0.047	0.014
	[0.7851,0.8435]	[0.1056,0.1429]	[0.0353,0.0625]	[0.0083,0.0229]
AGE				
16-24	0.736	0.148	0.083	0.033
	[0.6718,0.7921]	[0.1150,0.1872]	[0.0635,0.1080]	[0.0156,0.0689]
25-34	0.767	0.133	0.077	0.023
	[0.7249,0.8048]	[0.0973,0.1780]	[0.0661,0.0902]	[0.0119,0.0436]
35-44	0.783	0.169	0.035	0.013
	[0.7382,0.8228]	[0.1396,0.2037]	[0.0164,0.0720]	[0.0051,0.0307]
45-54	0.865	0.107	0.023	0.005
	[0.8397,0.8873]	[0.0788,0.1431]	[0.0092,0.0581]	[0.0008,0.0263]
55-64	0.814	0.138	0.040	0.007
	[0.7512,0.8645]	[0.1043,0.1806]	[0.0204,0.0780]	[0.0013,0.0398]
65+	0.946	0.034	0.020	0.000
	[0.8866,0.9747]	[0.0125,0.0893]	[0.0048,0.0830]	

	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
GENDER				
Male	0.837	0.113	0.040	0.009
	[0.8020,0.8676]	[0.0906,0.1411]	[0.0264,0.0604]	[0.0042,0.0198]
Female	0.796	0.132	0.053	0.018
	[0.7481,0.8371]	[0.1077,0.1615]	[0.0360,0.0776]	[0.0098,0.0341]
Diverse	0.810	0.112	0.078	0.000
	[0.5882,0.9274]	[0.0173,0.4744]	[0.0158,0.3071]	
Location				
Rarotonga	0.811	0.126	0.050	0.014
	[0.7762,0.8406]	[0.1073,0.1477]	[0.0368,0.0668]	[0.0078,0.0240]
Aitutaki	0.852	0.104	0.030	0.014
	[0.7928,0.8968]	[0.0685,0.1538]	[0.0124,0.0708]	[0.0046,0.0427]