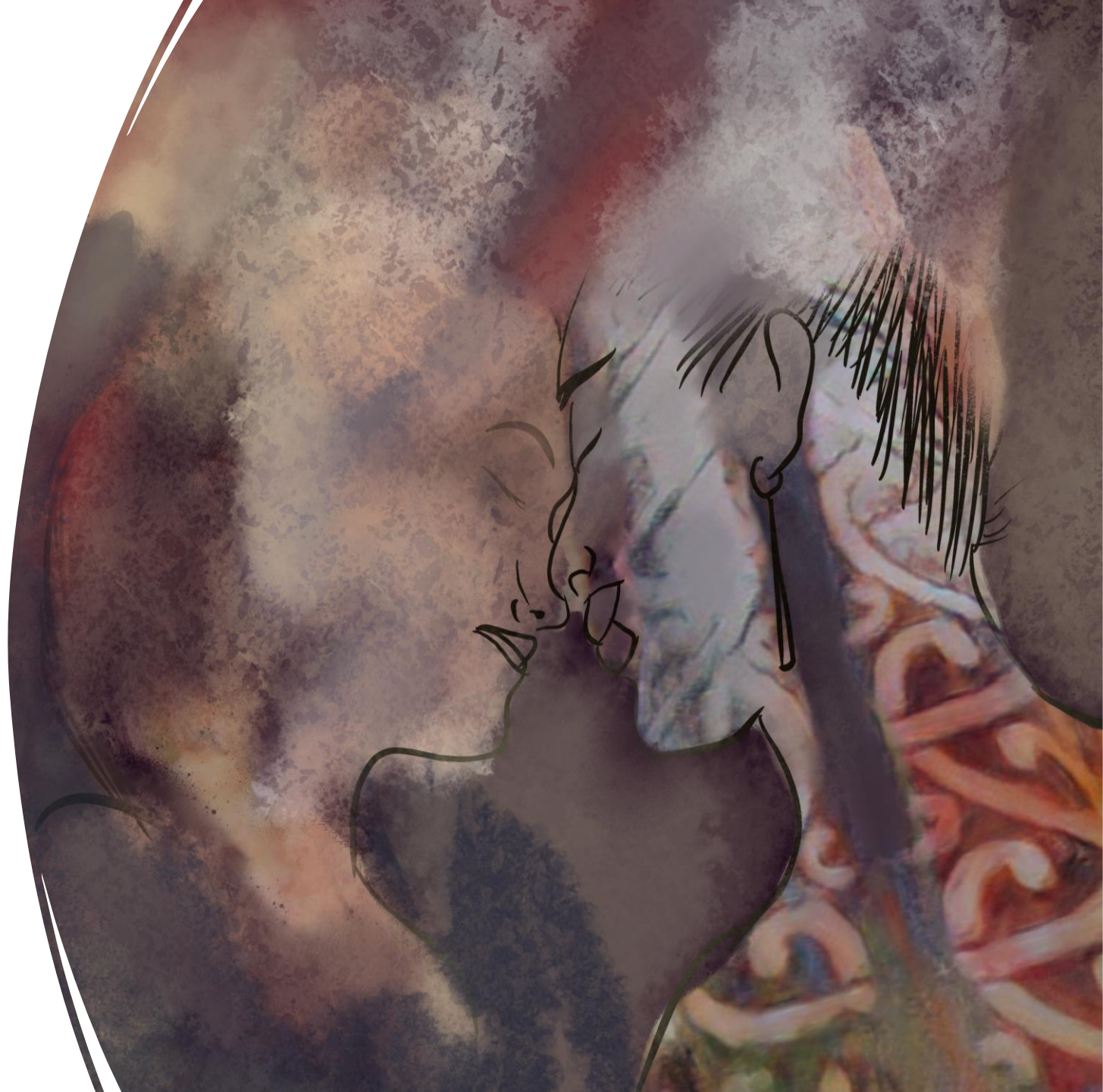


Investigating Barriers and Enablers to Preventive HIV Access for Māori

Dr Amohia Boulton
Ben Barton





Aim of project:

Investigate, identify and articulate the barriers and enablers to preventive HIV access, including PrEP uptake in Māori.

What do we already know about Māori, sexual health and HIV prevention?

- **Māori are largely missing from HIV prevention research in Aotearoa, leading to rising diagnoses and increased health inequities.**
- **Many Māori are diagnosed late, facing barriers like stigma, discrimination, and limited access to services, especially in rural areas.**
- **Awareness of prevention tools like PrEP is low, and Māori men who don't identify as gay are often excluded from prevention efforts.**



 placeholder for methodology





What we heard from our participants:

History and stigma

"We grew up with the horror stories of the HIV pandemic in the eighties, so that's often fresh in my mind ..."

"When I moved to Sydney in the 90s, they still had the Press then and every week there were obituaries – people were dying from AIDS. That was my reality in the 90s moving from New Zealand to that country."

Health information

"There's too much misinformation out there, people get confused and then they don't know what to believe."

"I've heard of PrEP, but I'm still not sure how it works... I don't feel confident in my understanding of it yet."





Access to Services

"It's just cold, it's medial, it's clinical, it's compliance-based."

"It's not easy to get the services, and when you do they're often very difficult to navigate."

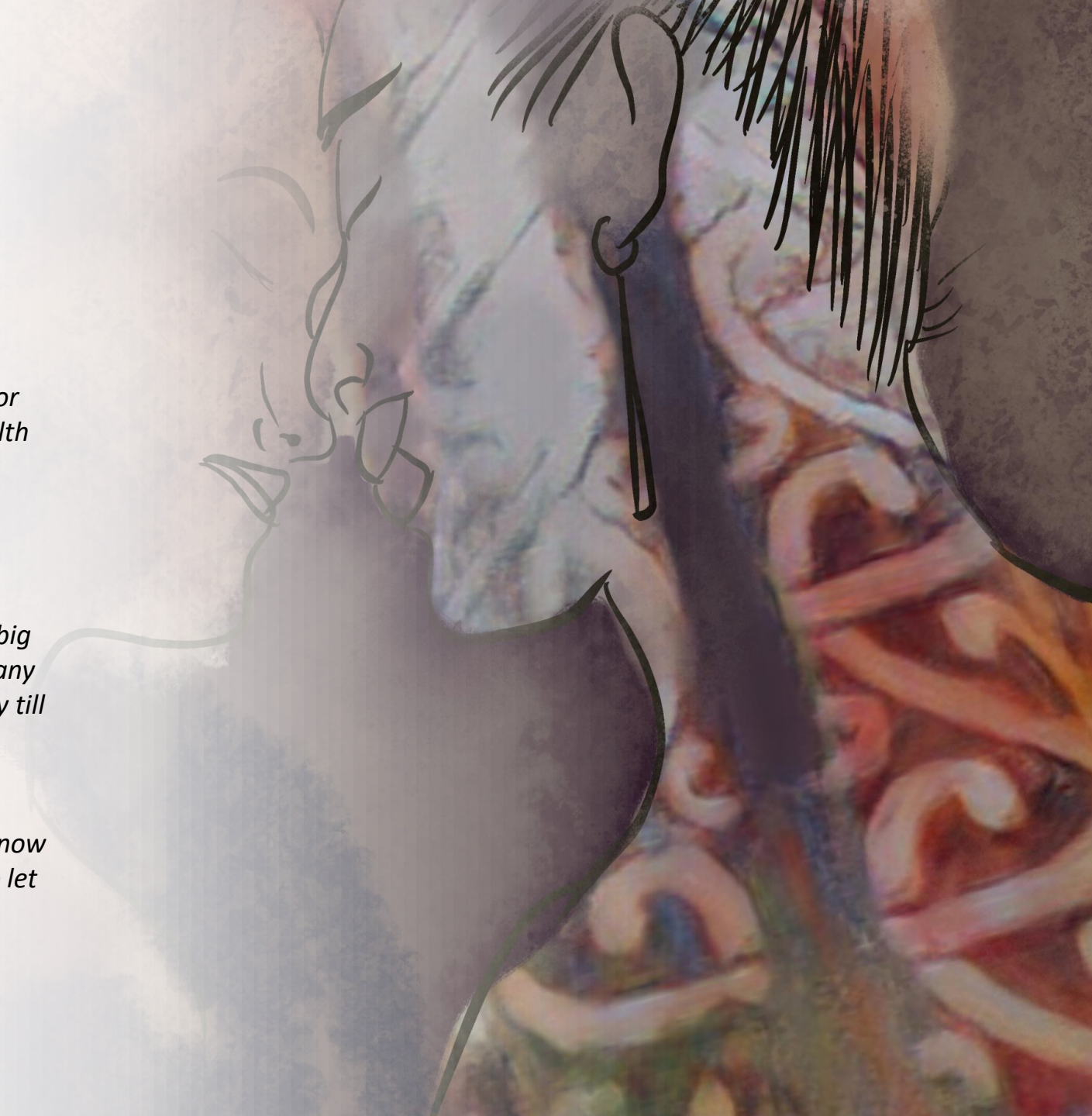
"In terms of sexual health and sexual health services, I think it's very poor that these things don't exist – that a kaupapa Māori specific sexual health service doesn't already exist in this day and age."

Sexual Identity

"I advocate hugely for small town people. That like me would go to the big city, get abused and then sent home and try and survive. Trying to find any kind of information in a small town was dead. I didn't hear the word gay till I was 20."

"What if I turn up [at a clinic] and then I see someone that I know from school, or I see someone that I know from Uni, or I see someone that I know from work, and then my cover is blown. And maybe they're not ready to let everyone know that they're gay."

"I want to be authentically myself. I think a part of the gay experience is sexual liberation."





What works?

Non-Judgmental Care

Safe, mana-enhancing spaces where people feel respected

Ease of Accessing Treatment

Simple, welcoming, and easy-to-navigate services

Building Trust through Outreach and Education

Information that is easy to access and reliable

Caring and Relational Staff

Genuine connections make a difference

After-Hours Support

Flexibility removes barriers to care

One-Stop-Shop Convenience

Everything in one place = less stress, more support





Looking Ahead – What Needs to Change?

Whakawhanaungatanga

Mindset Shift - *Sexual health should be celebrated, not shamed.*

Culturally Relevant Information - *Clear, accessible, and tailored to Māori.*

Balancing Privacy & Relational Care - *New ways to access care without stigma.*

Ensuring Everyone's Voice is Heard - *Services must reflect the needs of those most affected.*

Kaupapa Māori Sexual Health Services - *Spaces where Māori feel safe, supported, and valued.*





Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges:

- Recruitment was a major challenge, with slow progress and low initial engagement.
- Highlighted the sensitivity of the topic and reinforced the importance of addressing sexual health stigma and whakamā within the community.

Opportunities:

- Established valuable new connections and partnerships, essential for building trust within the community.
- Gained insight into the need for sustained relationships with participants, as many have felt used by past researchers who collected data without follow-up.
- Committed to nurturing these relationships, ensuring participants feel heard, valued, and supported beyond the scope of the project.





Next Steps

1. Participant Voices Output

Purpose: Create a participant-centred output to share insights and voices from the PrEP pilot with participants, partners, and other channels.

2. Technical Report

Purpose: Summarize aims, methods, findings, and implications of the PrEP pilot as an internal HRC document.

3. Journal Article

Purpose: Publish PrEP pilot findings for an international audience focused on sexual health and Indigenous health.

4. Conference presentation

Purpose: Disseminate findings at 4th International Indigenous Health and Wellbeing Conference 2025, Adelaide 16-19 June 2025





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