

Mānawatia a Matariki!

The editors of the *New Zealand Medical Journal*:
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David McBride, Roger Mulder, Kiki Maoate, Mark Weatherall, Frank Frizelle

Ka mahuta a Matariki I te pae, ka mahuta ō tatou tūmanako ki te tau
When Matariki rises above the horizon, our aspirations rise to the year ahead

When Matariki, a star cluster, rises in Aotearoa's north-eastern skies, it marks the start of the Māori new year. With an end of one year and the birth of another comes a time to reflect on the past and plan together for the future. With this in mind, the *New Zealand Medical Journal* editorial team has reflected on the commitments we made in the 15 January 2021 editorial. Now we're to give an update on our progress and signal the way forward.

1. **Develop a framework for potential authors to align their submissions with the cultural expectations of the NZMJ.**

The NZMJ editorial team strongly endorses the CONSIDER statement,¹ with its eight research domains and 17 criteria for the reporting of research involving Indigenous peoples and/or communities. We encourage authors to utilise the CONSIDER statement as a guideline during the design, development, implementation and reporting of their research. Stating how fully articles are aligned with the CONSIDER statement is important and will become essential.

2. **Utilise a Treaty of Waitangi framework to advocate for a minimum target of articles that report on Hauora Māori outcomes.**

The NZMJ is currently undergoing a review of all papers to assess the proportion of articles reporting on Hauora Māori outcomes, to determine a baseline for assessment of future publication trends.

3. **Ensure the ongoing retention of themed issues in health equity.**

The editorial team confirms their commitment to publishing themed

issues in health equity, reflected in our 21 May 2021 issue.

4. **Increase the number of Hauora Māori expert peer reviewers.**

The Māori sub-editors have undertaken a stocktake of our existing Hauora Māori expert peer reviewers and made a distinction between them and reviewers with Pacific health expertise. We will use a number of strategies to engage Hauora Māori expert peer reviewers from a range of disciplines.

The editorial team have committed to publishing the conference proceedings of the 2022 Hui Whakapiripiri conference hosted by the Health Research Council of New Zealand (HRCNZ) and their collaborative partners.

The NZMJ is committed to supporting publications that whakamana the perspectives of iwi and Māori health community stakeholders on the New Zealand health system. This was recently illustrated in the rapid publication of research on the Taranaki COVID-19 response from a Māori perspective by Manuirangi and Jarman in the 16 April 2021 issue.²

5. **Provide a template for peer reviewers to align articles with the cultural expectations of the NZMJ.**

This template is being developed and will align with the following principles:

a. That a clear framework is presented in which the article actively aligns its analysis of Māori data/content (eg, Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the social, political and cultural determinants of health, health equity, etc).

b. That authors are clear on their positioning within the research/ research team when presenting findings relevant to Māori.

c. That articles' discussions work to actively provide solutions that address inequity in Māori health.

d. That articles use language that supports a research environment of cultural safety for Māori.

6. **Oversee all publications and provide further peer review, or have the right to reject publications that do not align with the cultural expectations of the NZMJ.**

The editor-in-chief and sub-editors of the *NZMJ* have had a face-to-face hui to discuss the expectations of the Māori sub-editors. There was unanimous agreement that the *NZMJ* should reject publications promoting ethnic bias,³⁻⁶ thus taking an international lead in changing researcher and health practitioner culture in Aotearoa in a sustainable way.

We hope the above changes¹⁻⁶ will be sentinel measures allowing the editorial team to develop, refine and strive towards a culturally responsible publication process.

In further reflection over Matariki, the *NZMJ* editorial team also desire to extend our expectations beyond those expressed in the January editorial, specifically with respect to the use of te reo Māori in the journal. When authors express constructs and beliefs derived from Te Ao Māori, it is natural for them to use te reo Māori. The editorial team now extend the opportunity for all our authors to submit their abstracts in both te reo Māori and te reo Pākehā. This will act as a signpost for further cultural change to the journal, be a clear visual marker of our commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and acknowledge that te reo Māori is not only an official language, but also the first language of Aotearoa. Te reo Māori will provide a foundation from which our authors can articulate their kaupapa within a Te Ao Māori framework.

Stories from history relate how Tohunga would look towards Matariki: if the stars were clear and bright, it was a sign that a warm growing season was on its way. We hope, as an editorial team, that the clarity of our vision and commitments to authors, reviewers and readers will signal clearly that the whole health research community needs to demonstrate social accountability and the kaupapa we describe.

Competing interests:

Nil.

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