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**A COMPARISON OF
PACIFIC ISLAND VIOLENT YOUTH
OFFENDERS
WITH
MĀORI AND PĀLAGI VIOLENT
YOUTH OFFENDERS**

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Clinical Psychology, The University of Auckland, 2011.

“The Future Depends On What We Do In the Present”

Mahatma Ghandi; 1869 - 1948

Abstract

Violent offending is disproportionately represented amongst Pacific Island youth offenders. While previous research on Pacific Island youth has focussed on gangs and communities, contemporary understanding of this group is limited. The purpose of the study was to explore whether any prevalent risk factors existed among Pacific Island youth offenders who violently offend. Using file data from the New Zealand Police, the offending behaviour and social demographic characteristics of 200 Pacific Island youth offenders aged 10-24 years at the time of committing a violent crime was investigated. This study also compared Pacific Island youth offenders with Māori and Pālagi¹ youth offenders using the same criteria to determine whether similarities or differences existed. Youth offenders were matched with records from Ministry of Education relating to their educational characteristics such as their academic performance and behaviour in school. Data from this latter source was limited.

A number of similarities and differences between the three ethnic groups in their offending were identified including social and demographic characteristics. These included that Pacific Island youth offenders were more likely to have been born in New Zealand, to have grown up in the lowest socioeconomic deprivation areas in New Zealand, were more likely to be older when they first started offending and their first offence was more likely to be of a violent nature. Family violence was present amongst all three ethnic groups highlighting the ongoing importance of intervention in this area.

The findings of the current study are likely to have implications for government departments including the Ministries of Education, Justice, Police and Child, Youth and Family, along with programme providers and practitioners. Recommendations are made regarding clinical implications and future research on this population including the need to evaluate and enhance existing services for Pacific Island youths and their families.

¹ Pālagi is the Samoan term for Pākeha, Caucasian or European person in New Zealand.

Dedication

In loving memory:

Tautegaatufanua Kuresa Ioane

“The beauty of my mother was seen in her eyes, the place where love resides.”

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O lō outou sao ua matalupe ai nei le seuga, ma mati'e ai lo'u fa'amoemoe ma lenei taeao ma le aso fa'apitoa. Ua sagisagi fa'amanuao ai nei se lagona ma lo'u loto fa'agaeetia ona o lō outou lagolago mai. O la'u tatalo ia fa'atutumu e le Atua mamana o outou aiga i manu'a ona o mea ua outou fa'agaogaina ona o la outou auauna nei. Tau ina ia aogā lo'u nei tagata faatuva'a e fai se sao mo o tatou aiga, nu'u, ekalesia ma le malo.

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