

Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences
Summer Research Scholarships
2026/2027 Projects (Public Health)

Project code:	MHS088
Project title:	Health professions higher education: The role of micro-credentials and short forms of learning
Discipline:	Public Health - School of Medicine
Supervisor(s)	Ashwini Datt (Primary Supervisor)
Contact details	a.datt@auckland.ac.nz
Skills Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Searching, retrieving, reviewing and analysing literature, including web resources and academic databases. • Summarising key themes and reporting data in clear writing
Project description	
<p>This project is focused on scoping the potential of micro-credentials and short forms of learning for health professions higher education in NZ. The 10-week project will involve a scoping exercise to explore what currently constitutes health professions higher education and how (if at all) have micro-credentials or short forms of learnings being used for continuing professional development. The scoping will be limited to accredited, NZ professions only (https://www.health.govt.nz/regulation-legislation/health-practitioners/responsible-authorities). However, the remit of micro-credentials and short forms of learning for health professions higher education will be explored using global literature.</p>	

Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences
Summer Research Scholarships
2026/2027 Projects (Public Health)

Project code:	MHS089
Project title:	Student Perspectives on the “Two-Lane” Assessment Approach and AI Use at the University of Auckland
Discipline:	Public Health - School of Medicine
Supervisor(s)	Assoc Prof Vanessa Jordan (Primary Supervisor) Dr Nishani Lim
Contact details	v.jordan@auckland.ac.nz
Skills Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic understanding of qualitative research and its purpose • Strong verbal communication and interpersonal skills • Ability to conduct professional interviews with confidence • Organisational and time management skills • Attention to detail (e.g. managing transcripts and notes) • Ability to analyse and interpret information critically • Clear academic writing skills
Project description	
<p>This summer student project will explore perceptions of the recently introduced “two-lane” assessment approach and the evolving use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools in student assignments within the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences at the University of Auckland. The study aims to understand how students interpret and experience these changes, including perceived benefits, challenges, and implications for learning, academic integrity, and assessment design.</p> <p>A qualitative research design will be employed. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with 10 students including both undergraduate and postgraduate students. Interviews will explore attitudes toward AI use, awareness and interpretation of the two-lane approach, and its impact on learning.</p> <p>Data will be analysed using thematic analysis, to identify recurring patterns and key themes. Ethical approval will be sought, and all participants will provide informed consent.</p> <p>The findings will contribute to ongoing discussions about responsible AI integration in higher education and will hopefully inform future policy and practice within the faculty with the intention to publish the finalised thematic analysis.</p>	

Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences
Summer Research Scholarships
2026/2027 Projects (Public Health)

Project code:	MHS090
Project title:	What is known about how peer feedback literacy is developed and supported in collaborative learning in HPE?: A Scoping Review
Discipline:	Public Health - School of Medicine
Supervisor(s)	Gülay Dalgic (Primary Supervisor) Berna Guloglu
Contact details	g.dalgic@auckland.ac.nz
Skills Needed	This project will provide an opportunity for a student to develop ability in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Searching academic databases, using a referencing software • Screening and extract data from primary studies • Reading and evaluating research articles across qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods designs • Summarising and synthesising findings for a research audience
Project description	
<p>Feedback literacy is a fast-growing concept, and it is increasingly recognised as essential for health professions students. While existing reviews have examined feedback literacy broadly and peer assessment as an evaluative tool, no review has mapped how students develop the capacity to give and receive peer feedback in structured group learning settings such as problem-based learning, team-based learning, case-based learning, and interprofessional learning. This scoping review will map the existing literature on developing peer feedback literacy across face-to-face and online collaborative group learning contexts in health professions education (HPE). Findings will be synthesised narratively to identify what is currently known, how feedback literacy is supported or constrained within group learning environments, and where critical gaps remain. The review will inform both curriculum design and future empirical research on peer feedback practices in HPE.</p>	

Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences
Summer Research Scholarships
2026/2027 Projects (Public Health)

Project code:	MHS091
Project title:	An Evaluation of the Authenticity and Capabilities of Generative Artificial Intelligence Systems for Reviewing Complex Journal Articles
Discipline:	Public Health - School of Medicine
Supervisor(s)	Marcus A. Henning (Primary Supervisor) Professor Chris Krägeloh Associate Professor Craig Webster Dr Yan Chen
Contact details	m.henning@auckland.ac.nz
Skills Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature search • Use of AI systems
Project description	
<p>There has been considerable debate in the literature concerning the capacity of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) systems when summarising and critically reviewing academic articles. This debate extends to questions about the authenticity, reliability, and accuracy of GenAI outputs, particularly when engaging with complex, theory-driven, or highly abstract scholarly work. Concerns have also been raised about issues such as hallucinations, superficial interpretation, and the inability of such systems to fully capture disciplinary nuance. In this project, we aim to develop a series of five GenAI-generated reviews (approximately 1,000 words each) using several widely used platforms, including Gemini, Claude, and Microsoft Copilot. We will identify a selection of well-cited articles published in reputable peer-reviewed journals. These articles will first be independently and critically assessed by experienced academics and then reviewed by the selected GenAI systems to enable direct comparison. Additionally, we will develop a structured checklist to evaluate the quality of these reviews, drawing on established frameworks such as SANRA (Scale for the Assessment of Narrative Review Articles) and CASP (Critical Appraisal Skills Programme). The study will employ a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both discourse and content analysis to systematically compare human- and AI-generated outputs.</p>	

Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences

Summer Research Scholarships

2026/2027 Projects (Public Health)

Project code:	MHS092
Project title:	Ableism and AI in Health Professions Education: A critical narrative review
Discipline:	Public Health - School of Medicine
Supervisor(s)	Neera Jain (Primary Supervisor) Susan Bull
Contact details	neera.jain@auckland.ac.nz
Skills Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good organisation skills • Critical thinking skills • Self-direction (with support) • Interest in equity, justice, and ethics in education • A curious and critical stance towards AI • Lived experience of disability would be an asset to this project • Previous experiences with literature reviews an asset but not required • Any previous knowledge of disability studies and ableism theory would be an asset to this project, but not required
Project description	
<p>AI promises to level the playing field in access to knowledge and to address pressing issues facing society. In health and education contexts, the use of AI is increasing rapidly. For people with disabilities, AI is promised as a tool to address societal barriers. Yet simultaneously, critical existential questions have arisen about AI's inherent biases, alongside its social and environmental impacts. We know that AI is trained on data that is always already shaped by ableism. Our educational and healthcare contexts are also steeped in ableism. To our knowledge, the literature has yet to sufficiently engage with the intertwined tensions of ableism and AI in health professions education. In this project, we will scope the literature and develop a critical narrative synthesis to more systematically examine how current literature addresses matters of disability and access in relation to AI's use in health professions education, and how the discourse of this literature aligns with or resists ableist logics.</p> <p>The summer scholar will support the team in the process of developing a search strategy, collating the corpus of literature, reviewing the corpus for applicability, and critically analysing the literature. Depending on interest and contribution to the project, the summer scholar could be part of the authorship team on a publication from this work.</p>	

Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences
Summer Research Scholarships
2026/2027 Projects (Public Health)

Project code:	MHS093
Project title:	Patterns and outcomes of falls in older trauma patients in Aotearoa New Zealand
Discipline:	Public Health - School of Medicine
Supervisor(s)	Rajneeta Saraf (Primary Supervisor) Andrew MacCormick
Contact details	r.saraf@auckland.ac.nz
Skills Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest in trauma, surgery, emergency medicine, or geriatric medicine • Basic understanding of clinical research methods • Attention to detail and good organisational skills • Basic knowledge of Microsoft Excel and/or statistical software (e.g., SPSS, R, or STATA) • Ability to interpret clinical information from medical records and trauma databases • Basic literature review and academic writing skills • Ability to maintain patient confidentiality and handle sensitive health data appropriately • No prior trauma research experience is essential, as supervision and support will be provided throughout the project.
Project description	
<p>Trauma in older adults is an increasing public health issue in Aotearoa New Zealand, with falls and low-energy injuries contributing to significant hospital admissions, loss of independence, and mortality. This project aims to investigate the burden, characteristics, and outcomes of trauma in patients aged 55 years and older, with a particular focus on falls-related injuries.</p> <p>Using trauma registry and routinely collected hospital data, the student will work on a retrospective clinical research project examining injury patterns, mechanisms of injury, hospital length of stay, ICU admission, operative intervention, and discharge outcomes in older trauma patients. The project will involve identifying eligible patients admitted following traumatic injury and analyzing how factors such as injury severity, frailty, and comorbidities influence clinical outcomes.</p> <p>During the 10-week scholarship, the student will assist with literature review, data linkage, data extraction, data cleaning, and statistical analysis under supervision. They will gain hands-on experience in trauma research, epidemiology, and clinical data analysis within a supervised academic environment, while also developing skills in critical appraisal of scientific literature, scientific writing, and presentation of research findings.</p>	

Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences
Summer Research Scholarships
2026/2027 Projects (Public Health)

Project code:	MHS094
Project title:	Exploring environmental awareness, medicine storage and disposal practices of health consumers in Aotearoa New Zealand
Discipline:	Public Health - School of Pharmacy
Supervisor(s)	Trudi Aspden (Primary Supervisor) Sara Hanning Rob Burrell
Contact details	t.aspden@auckland.ac.nz
Skills Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A critical and curious mind • Basic quantitative data analysis skills • The ability to write academic reports • The ability to reflect and learn from feedback
Project description	
<p>The student allocated this project will be involved in reviewing relevant literature, helping to develop and pilot a questionnaire, and amending it according to the feedback received. The student will also be involved in participant recruitment, data collation, cleaning then analysing and writing up the findings. This project best suits a pharmacy student with an interest in planetary health.</p>	

Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences
Summer Research Scholarships
2026/2027 Projects (Public Health)

Project code:	MHS095
Project title:	Developing a Comparison Cohort to Evaluate Lungs4Life
Discipline:	Public Health - School of Population Health
Supervisor(s)	David Broderick (Primary Supervisor) Janine Paynter Cass Byrnes
Contact details	david.broderick@auckland.ac.nz
Skills Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest in child health, respiratory disease, epidemiology, or health services research • Basic data skills, such as R, or other statistical programmes • Ability to work carefully with clinical and administrative health data • Good attention to detail when defining cohorts and checking data quality • Clear written communication • No prior experience with linked health data is required, but enthusiasm to learn is important
Project description	
<p>Lungs4Life supports children who have had three or more hospital admissions for viral respiratory illness and may be at risk of longer-term respiratory problems, including bronchiectasis.</p> <p>In this 10-week project, the student will help build a comparison cohort to support future evaluation of Lungs4Life. They will review relevant literature, define eligibility criteria, identify suitable comparison children, and develop a clear plan for comparing outcomes between enrolled and non-enrolled children.</p> <p>Where data access allows, the student will also produce early descriptive summaries of hospitalisation patterns, demographics, and respiratory outcomes. This work will provide an important foundation for future analyses of whether Lungs4Life improves follow-up, earlier identification, and longer-term respiratory health.</p>	

Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences
Summer Research Scholarships
2026/2027 Projects (Public Health)

Project code:	MHS096
Project title:	What are we breathing? Measuring air pollution in Grafton and assessing health risks.
Discipline:	Public Health - School of Population Health
Supervisor(s)	Dr Jamie Hosking (Primary Supervisor) Professor Alistair Woodward Dr Angela Beros
Contact details	jamie.hosking@auckland.ac.nz
Skills Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An interest in the impact of the physical environment on human health. • Strong organisational skills and attention to detail. • An interest in learning how to collect, manage and analyse quantitative data. • Good written communication skills for preparing reports and summarising findings. • The ability to work independently as well as collaboratively with supervisors.
Project description	
<p>Air pollution from traffic is a major risk factor for cardiovascular and respiratory disease, even in cities such as Auckland, where overall pollution levels are relatively low. The Health and Air Pollution in New Zealand (HAPINZ 3.0) study estimated that in 2016 air pollution in Aotearoa contributed to 3,239 premature adult deaths and 13,155 hospitalisations. More than 60% of these health impacts were attributed to nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) emissions from motor vehicles.</p> <p>Exposure to air pollution, however, can vary considerably at the local scale, particularly near busy roads, hospitals, and urban campuses such as Grafton.</p> <p>With support from your supervisors, you will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deploy portable monitoring equipment at selected sites across the Grafton area to measure nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) concentrations. • Manage and analyse the collected data to identify spatial variations in pollution levels between locations. • Interpret the findings in relation to health risks and national and international air quality guidelines. • Examine the policy implications of local air pollution, including potential impacts on transport planning, urban design, and public health in Aotearoa. <p>By the end of the project, you will produce a written report summarising the study findings and outlining their public health significance and policy implications.</p>	

Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences
Summer Research Scholarships
2026/2027 Projects (Public Health)

Project code:	MHS097
Project title:	Interventions Promoting Perioperative Staff Wellbeing and Patient Care
Discipline:	Public Health - School of Population Health
Supervisor(s)	Dr Magda Rosin (Primary Supervisor) Prof Cliona Ni Mhurchu
Contact details	m.rosin@auckland.ac.nz
Skills Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong attention to detail and good organisational skills • Ability to work independently • Basic proficiency in Microsoft Word and Excel • Familiarity with reference management software (e.g., EndNote, Zotero) - but training/support can be provided
Project description	
<p>Background: Perioperative teams work in high-pressure, time-critical environments where staff wellbeing directly influences teamwork, communication, and patient safety. Previous reviews looked interventions targeting staff wellbeing, teamwork, or patient outcomes. However, less is known about how perioperative interventions are developed and how they link staff-focused changes, such as team functioning, to patient care outcomes.</p> <p>Aim: To map staff-focused interventions in perioperative settings, including how they were developed and delivered, and what staff and patient care outcomes were measured.</p> <p>Methods: This scoping review will follow the JBI methodology for scoping reviews. The search strategy, database searches, and deduplication will be completed prior to the student commencing. The student will screen records against pre-defined eligibility criteria, extract data using a structured framework, and synthesise findings descriptively. Key data extracted will include intervention characteristics, development and delivery, setting, staff wellbeing measures, patient outcome measures, and reported associations between the two. Interpretation and synthesis of findings will be supported by clinical colleagues from Health NZ.</p> <p>Expected outcomes: The review will contribute to a peer-reviewed publication, a seminar presentation, and will help inform the development of interventions with perioperative staff in NZ. The student will develop skills in evidence synthesis, systematic data extraction, and academic writing.</p>	

Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences
Summer Research Scholarships
2026/2027 Projects (Public Health)

Project code:	MHS098
Project title:	Invisible intersections: Perimenopause, disability, and the workplace: counting hidden costs
Discipline:	Public Health - School of Population Health
Supervisor(s)	Emma Sadera (Primary Supervisor) Dr Elina Enni Suonio
Contact details	e.sadera@auckland.ac.nz
Skills Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • literature review experience • qualitative research familiarity
Project description	
<p>For women with disabilities and/or neurodivergence, the challenges during perimenopause are intensified by existing accessibility barriers and systemic inequities. These impacts are often further compounded intersectionally for women from other minoritised communities and groups, who may also navigate cultural expectations, systemic barriers, and limited access to culturally responsive or affirming health information. Despite growing international attention to menopause as a workplace issue, there is limited research on how perimenopause affects disabled and neurodivergent women, including disabled women from minoritised communities and groups, and how these intersecting factors influence employment outcomes. This evidence gap limits effective policy development across gender, disability, minoritised communities and groups, health, and labour portfolios.</p> <p>This project will undertake desk research to identify the literature in this area, conduct a systematic review of it, and support the development of a research study plan.</p>	

Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences
Summer Research Scholarships
2026/2027 Projects (Public Health)

Project code:	MHS099
Project title:	Navigating Medication Adherence as a Young Adult or Adolescent in Rural and Underserved Contexts
Discipline:	Public Health - School of Population Health
Supervisor(s)	Janine Wiles (Primary Supervisor)
Contact details	j.wiles@auckland.ac.nz
Skills Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature review • keyword searching • data extraction • understanding medication adherence frameworks and social determinants of health • familiarity with rural health, health inequities, underserved populations • qualitative synthesis and thematic analysis • academic writing and communication • Project organisation - time management, workflow, attention to detail
Project description	
<p>Medication adherence among adolescents and young adults is a critical determinant of long-term health outcomes, yet adherence challenges are amplified in rural and underserved communities where structural, social, and economic barriers intersect. Despite growing attention to adherence in adult populations, the evidence base specific to younger cohorts in geographically or socially marginalized contexts remains fragmented and under-synthesized. This project proposes a comprehensive scoping review to map existing research on medication adherence among adolescents and young adults living in rural or underserved settings. Guided by the Joanna Briggs Institute methodology, the review will systematically identify, chart, and synthesize peer-reviewed and grey literature to clarify how adherence is defined, measured, and theorized; what contextual factors shape adherence behaviours; and which interventions have been evaluated. Particular attention will be given to social determinants, health-system access, cultural considerations, and digital or community-based strategies relevant to rurality and marginalization. By consolidating disparate evidence, this project will illuminate gaps, methodological limitations, and opportunities for future research and intervention design. The findings will provide a foundational evidence map to inform policy, guide targeted health-service planning, and support the development of context-responsive adherence interventions for young people in rural and underserved communities.</p>	

Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences
Summer Research Scholarships
2026/2027 Projects (Public Health)

Project code:	MHS100
Project title:	Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and Neurodiversity
Discipline:	Public Health - School of Population Health
Supervisor(s)	Joanna Ting Wai Chu (Primary Supervisor)
Contact details	jt.chu@auckland.ac.nz
Skills Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative Interviewing • Clear communication • Some experience with qualitative data • Good writing skill
Project description	
<p>Neurodiversity has become an increasingly influential framework in research, policy, education, and service development. It is often used to recognise and affirm neurological differences such as autism, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, dyslexia, and other neurodevelopmental conditions as part of human diversity rather than solely as deficits or disorders. However, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) appears to remain relatively absent from mainstream neurodiversity discourse. The project includes interviewing key stakeholders to understand the relationship between FASD and neurodiversity, what barriers may contribute to its exclusion, and what more inclusive framings might look like. The student will conduct some of the interviews, transcribe, and support analysis.</p>	

Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences
Summer Research Scholarships
2026/2027 Projects (Public Health)

Project code:	MHS101
Project title:	What does a digital health specialist career look like?
Discipline:	Public Health - School of Population Health
Supervisor(s)	Karen Jean Day (Primary Supervisor) Salma Arabi Jos Aarts
Contact details	k.day@auckland.ac.nz
Skills Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature search and analysis (with support) • Interview skills • Time management and administrative skills • If there is time, help with writing a paper for publication
Project description	
<p>Research shows that digital health specialists occupy a wide range of roles. We know what their competencies are and what types of work they do. Many digital health specialists do a combination of digital health and clinical work (doctors, nurses and allied healthcare professionals). Clinical careers, e.g., doctors and nurses, are well-established – it is easy to see how one might progress through a clinical career from junior to senior roles.</p> <p>What is not clear is how the known competencies and roles lead to digital health specialist careers, how people become digital health specialists, how their careers start and end, and what their roles consist of. The best way to find this out is to do biographical interviews with digital health specialists and ask them about their careers.</p> <p>With ethical approval, we plan to conduct up to 20 interviews, analyse them thematically, and write a paper for publication in a scholarly journal. We need you to assist us with the literature review, help invite and set up people for interviews, transcribe and analyse the interviews, and, if there is time, help with writing the research up for publication.</p>	

Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences

Summer Research Scholarships

2026/2027 Projects (Public Health)

Project code:	MHS102
Project title:	Estimating the health impact of a junk food advertising ban on Auckland Transport
Discipline:	Public Health - School of Population Health
Supervisor(s)	Kelly Garton (Primary Supervisor) Cristina Cleghorn
Contact details	kelly.garton@auckland.ac.nz
Skills Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature review and critical appraisal • Basic quantitative analysis (e.g. descriptive statistics) • Taking initiative and problem solving • Communication skills (e.g. working in a small team, asking for help when needed, liaising with Council departments to ask for data)
Project description	
<p>New Zealanders are surrounded by junk food marketing in our day-to-day lives, with known negative impacts on our food preferences and intakes, and consequently our health outcomes. One relatively simple strategy to reduce this unhealthy marketing exposure, with demonstrated cost-effectiveness, is eliminating unhealthy food marketing on publicly owned property, such as transport infrastructure.</p> <p>Several jurisdictions around the world have implemented some form of advertising restrictions for unhealthy food and drink products within public transport systems, including the City of London, Amsterdam, and the Australian Capital Territory. Some studies have quantified their impacts. In London for example, households purchased 6.7% less energy from high fat, salt and sugar (HFSS) products, following the implementation of the 2019 ban on HFSS advertising on all Transport for London services. The findings from that analysis allowed researchers to estimate that the advertising restriction caused a 4.8% decrease in obesity in the London population 12 months after implementation, estimating that this would save £218 million in health system costs over the lifetime of the Greater London Population, along with an increase of 16,394 quality-adjusted life years (QALYs).</p> <p>This summer research project will involve reviewing the existing evidence on the effectiveness of junk food advertising bans in transport systems, obtaining data on public transit usage from Auckland Transport, and collating our existing evidence on the prevalence of unhealthy marketing in these settings. You will work with your supervisors to come up with realistic estimates of reduced unhealthy food and drink marketing exposure, and input this into an existing quantitative model, to estimate the potential health impacts if a similar policy was put in place by Auckland Transport.</p>	

Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences
Summer Research Scholarships
2026/2027 Projects (Public Health)

Project code:	MHS103
Project title:	Regulating Non-Prescribed Dietary Supplements: How Does Aotearoa New Zealand Compare? A Cross-Jurisdictional Analysis
Discipline:	Public Health - School of Population Health
Supervisor(s)	Professor Cliona Ni Mhurchu (Primary Supervisor) Dr Magda Rosin
Contact details	c.nimhurchu@auckland.ac.nz
Skills Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This project would suit a student with an interest in nutrition and population health. The student will develop skills in policy analysis, systematic data extraction, and academic writing.
Project description	
<p>Background: Non-prescribed dietary supplements (including vitamins, minerals, and other bioactive compounds) are widely used to support health and wellbeing. However, the way such products are regulated varies considerably between countries. In Aotearoa New Zealand, dietary supplements are regulated under the Food Act 2014. In contrast to therapeutic products (medicines and medical devices), there is no pre-approval process, which has implications for product safety, labelling, and permitted health claims. As the supplement market continues to grow, understanding how New Zealand's approach compares internationally is increasingly important.</p> <p>Aim: To compare how non-prescribed dietary supplements are classified and regulated in New Zealand and selected international jurisdictions.</p> <p>Methods: This project will review legislation, regulations, and official guidance governing non-prescribed dietary supplements in New Zealand and selected comparable jurisdictions (e.g., Australia, UK, EU, Canada, USA). A structured data extraction framework will be developed to enable comparison across key regulatory domains, including product classification, pre-market requirements, permitted ingredients, labelling, health claims, safety monitoring, and enforcement. Findings will be synthesised, highlighting similarities, differences, and gaps in New Zealand's current approach.</p> <p>Expected Outcomes. The student will develop skills in policy analysis, systematic data extraction, and academic writing. The project will contribute to a peer-reviewed publication and presentation.</p>	

Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences
Summer Research Scholarships
2026/2027 Projects (Public Health)

Project code:	MHS104
Project title:	Understanding social connection for Rainbow+ elders
Discipline:	Public Health - Te Kupenga Hauora Māori
Supervisor(s)	Dr Claire Gooder (Primary Supervisor) Dr Carl Webber
Contact details	c.gooder@auckland.ac.nz
Skills Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature review skills • Thematic analysis • Social skills • Some connection to Rainbow+ communities would be preferable
Project description	
<p>This project is suitable for a summer scholar with no experience in health research. The project involves conducting a literature review of current research on social connectedness among Rainbow+ elders. The student will also consider the themes from the literature review in relation to results from a questionnaire of Rainbow+ elders involved in Rainbow+-friendly social connection events run by Age Concern Auckland.</p> <p>This project is part of a wider Rainbow+ community-led project understanding social connectedness for Rainbow+ communities as they age. The current cohort of Rainbow+ older people (55+) carries with them a history of discrimination and trauma that can make entering mainstream older adult spaces raise questions of belonging, acceptance and safety. Reduced social connection can lead to loneliness, social isolation, and poor health outcomes for ageing populations. This project – a collaboration between Age Concern Auckland and Ageing Proud research – seeks to develop safe and equitable models for social connection that are community-endorsed and trust-based.</p> <p>The student who works on this project will be able to observe and be mentored by the wider team. Alongside the standalone work being undertaken in this studentship, they can attend research development groups and planning hui where appropriate.</p>	