



Dr Rees Tapsell

Do western systems of diagnosis and classification cater adequately for cultural imperatives?

The World Health Organisation (WHO) and the American Psychiatric Association (APA) are currently in the process of developing the most recent manuals for psychiatric diagnosis and classification (the ICD 11 and DSM 1V respectively). Psychiatric systems and clinical practice are becoming increasingly reductionist and more and more driven by these systems of diagnosis and classification at the expense of a number of key contextual variables, culture being one.

Dr Tapsell and Dr Hinemoa Elder will use the experience of Māori, drawing on an extensive and ever growing empirical data base to argue that unless we ensure that cultural factors are considered in the processes of assessment, diagnosis (and classification), treatment planning and service development in a formal way such that they are always addressed, the gap between Māori and non-Māori mental health status will never improve.

Dr Tapsell was born and brought up in Rotorua, and hails from the Te Arawa tribe of that region. He attended the University of Otago where he graduated MBChB in 1988. He spent several years working in family medicine and the field of alcohol and drug work and after a period of travelling he began his postgraduate training in psychiatry, gaining his fellowship to the Australia and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP) in 1998. Dr Tapsell works as the executive clinical director for the Midland Regional Forensic Psychiatry Services; he is a psychiatrist Deputy Member on the Mental Health Review Tribunal, and is an honorary clinical lecturer with the Auckland school of medicine and he is currently a General Councillor of the RANZCP.