

If you have anything you would like to add, please get in touch with Geoff (g.handsfield@auckland.ac.nz) to share.

Greetings ABI,

This month's Equity and Diversity Committee newsletter will begin with a piece from Associate Professor *Rachel Simon-Kumar* in *Social and Community Health in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences*. As a researcher and teacher her work sits at the interface of cultural diversity, migration and gender, and the experience of social and health inequalities. In 2019, she was appointed *Co-Director of the Centre for Asian Health Research and Evaluation (CAHRE)* at the *School of Population Health*. She has also served as *International Student Advisor* in the School. In a voluntary capacity, she serves as a *Trustee of Shama, the Ethnic Women's Trust*, whose programmes are aimed at empowering migrant and ethnic minority women. In all these roles, the theory and practice of equity has been fundamental to her career.

The following piece touches on some issues of equity for Asian/ethnic minority (A/EM) population groups, and our role as a university in the changing landscape of diversity in New Zealand.



We know that New Zealand is increasingly becoming a multi-ethnic – Asian and MeLAA (Middle Eastern, Latin American and African) groups are currently around 17% of the total NZ population, roughly doubling in number between 2006 and 2018. A majority of this group are migrants who have arrived since radical amendments to NZ's immigration policy in 1987.

Although immigration processes ensure general healthiness – “the Healthy Migrant Effect” – there are particular health conditions associated with the A/EM population group. These include pronounced levels of CVD, diabetes, and vitamin B and D deficiencies. South Asian women are notably represented in neonatal mortality rates, intentional injuries, and some statistics relating to suicide. This snapshot of their health implicitly points to the impact of both culture and migration. For example, culturally, Asians are less likely to undertake physical activities. Migration, on the other hand, impacts identity, social connectedness, participation, and belonging, i.e., it can foster marginalization that has wellbeing implications. To understand health outcomes, research must understand the complex ways in which both interact.

Despite the growing Asian/ethnic minority population, there is relatively little research evidence on this population group. My colleagues and I conducted a systematic review of all health research in New Zealand on Asians between 2010 and 2019 (Chiang et al., *forthcoming*) and concluded that much of the published research focuses on a minority of ‘ethnic’ diseases, such as CVD and diabetes. Meanwhile, there are huge gaps in themes ranging from Asian sexuality and gender diversities, eating disorders and young people's needs, ageing A/EM populations, brain, respiratory health, cancer, etc., etc. The list goes on. Without broadening our research lens, we cannot identify areas where there is genuine need.

At the same time, A/EM are also a very heterogeneous group; they are diverse in terms of socio-economic status, cultural backgrounds (religion, social group, region), visa status (citizens, permanent residents, those on temporary visas, students, from refugee backgrounds), and the length of time in the country (born in New Zealand or recently arrived). So although we tend to label them as ‘Asians’ or ‘migrants’, the experiences of this group are vastly different. This heterogeneity requires that we understand equity in nuanced ways.

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In a recently published book, *Intersections of Inequality, Migration and Diversification*, my co-editors and I (Simon-Kumar et al., 2020) argue that while it is important to study the inequalities between migrant and non-migrant groups, what is becoming more relevant to focus on are the growing inequalities *among, between* and *within* migrant groups. Social variables such as age, sex/gender, ethnicity, occupation, etc. refract the lived experiences of migrants in considerably different ways.

For instance, the wellbeing of a nurse on a temporary visa from the Philippines or India who may have arrived 2 years ago is vastly different from a IT engineer from the same region on a skilled migrant visa who moved to New Zealand around 20 years ago. Although there may be cultural commonalities, there are significant other differences between them. Equity within these intersections needs to be better understood if we are to make policy or programmes that are effectively targeted.

Hopefully, with the entry of a new generation of young scholars into university who are keen to study aspects of their own identity-groups, there might be a future growth of research in these fields.

According to the *2020 Equity Profile* released by the University of Auckland, by and large, Asian and MeLAA students are the *second largest* student groups enrolled at both the undergraduate and postgraduate level (Equity Profile 2020, pg. 11-12). Not only is this a significant student presence, this body of A/EM young people have honed their consciousness and identity in an era where race and ethnicity are a dominant topic of public discussion. In many ways, they are the generation that has entered NZ society in the wake of the Christchurch massacre of 2019, the Black Lives Matter movement, global rise of racism, attention to indigenous people's rights, and the NZ government's own diversity and inclusion platform that includes the recent dramatic increase in ethnic minority politicians in Parliament. A/EM young people also increasingly recognize themselves as *tauiwi*, keen to build a new connections and whakawhanuanga with tangata whenua.

Against these significant diversifications among the student body, it is imperative our teaching and research institutions are better equipped to reflect the new generation of A/EM learners. This means better representation of Asian/ethnic minority staff across the university's faculties, visibility of A/EM role models in decision-making, more courses and use of frameworks that reflect Asian/ethnic minority realities. At CAHRE, for instance, one of our priorities is to develop a framework for doing culturally-sensitive and culturally-appropriate A/EM health research so as to support the next generation of health scholars. Progress in these areas can only be possible with commitment from the University. Although neither the University's recently published *Equity Review Report (2021)* nor *Te Ara Tautika Annual Plan (2020-2022)* specifically mention Asian/ethnic minority groups and their needs, it may well be that these become an explicit part of its equity agenda in the future.

References

Chiang, A., Simon-Kumar, R. Pereis-John, R. (forthcoming) A Decade of Asian and Ethnic Minority Health Research in New Zealand: Findings from a Scoping Review, *New Zealand Medical Journal*.

Equity Reports, The University of Auckland, <https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/about-us/about-the-university/equity-at-the-university/about-equity/monitoring--reporting-and-best-practice.html>

Simon-Kumar, R. Collins, F. Friesen, W. (2020, eds) *Intersections of Inequality Migration and Diversification, The Politics of Mobility in Aotearoa/New Zealand*, Palgrave Macmillan: Switzerland.

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Mental Health Awareness Week

This week is Mental Health Awareness week and Wiki Whai Hauora, our 'week of working towards health and wellbeing'. A few activities still remain for the week and can be found here: <https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/students/student-support/be-well/campaigns-and-events/wiki-whai-hauora.html>

The Equity and Diversity Committee would like to endorse making every week Mental Health Week, and encouraging everyone to prioritize activities and habits that can support your overall mental health and wellbeing. This includes daily exercise, nutritious meals, time with friends and loved ones, and setting appropriate boundaries for when to work and when to relax. Remote working situations carry with them some challenges, and that's more of a reason to prioritize mental wellbeing: set up an ergonomic environment for yourself, set constraints of working time vs non-working time, set realistic goals of work to achieve each day/week, and make sure to unplug from the internet and get some exercise time and time outdoors.

Read a student story about mental health lessons here: <https://www.staff.auckland.ac.nz/en/news-events-and-notice/news/news-2021/09/student-shares-hard-won-mental-health-tips.html>

Read about lessons for Boundary Setting during lockdown here: <https://www.staff.auckland.ac.nz/en/news-events-and-notice/news/news-2021/09/balancing-boundaries-with-flexibility.html>

Creating Cultures of Consent and Respect Action Plan

The University has been working on an action plan for an improved culture of consent. Read more about it here: <https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/students/student-support/be-well/harmful-sexual-behaviours/harmful-sexual-behaviours-action-plan.html>

Get Vaccinated!

Everyone living in New Zealand can get vaccinated free of charge, including international students. The government's priority is to get everyone in the country vaccinated as this is the best, fastest, and safest way to protect health from SARS-CoV-2. There are hundreds of vaccination sites all over New Zealand. You can find one close to you using this interactive map: <https://karawhiua.nz/all-clinics/>

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Spotlight on: Non-English Academic Works of Staff and Students

It's no secret that the ABI is home to really bright minds and creative thinkers. Some of our brilliant staff and students did some of their work outside of the ABI at Institutions working in languages other than English. This section of our newsletter is dedicated to non-English works of our staff and students to highlight what they have done in other countries and other languages. Here, we offer titles and abstracts directly translated into English to give a sense of the work that's been done. If you have a non-English academic work you'd like to share, please email abiedc@auckland.ac.nz or g.handsfield@auckland.ac.nz

Our first spotlight is on **Dr Mousa Kazemi**, who worked in Iran in the agricultural sciences before coming to New Zealand and pursuing a PhD in Bioengineering. Dr Kazemi has 8 journal articles and 9 public conference presentations in Farsi, which he presented in Iran from the late 1990s through the 2000s. An example of some of his work in agricultural science:

Kazemi, M. and Shaeri, A. M. (2004), Assessing public extensional and educational needs regarding natural resource management in Iran , Quarter Journal of Engineering System of Agriculture and Natural Resource (ISSN: 1545-1735), Vol. 2, No, 4.. URL: www.magiran.com/maginfo.asp?mgID=3517



Abstract:

This paper represents an assessment of the public educational and extensional needs as well as their respective proper extensional methods, reflecting the people participation in natural resources conservation, renewal and development. It is an applied research used the survey method with a reliable and valid questionnaire as a research instrument. The statistical population included the extension officers at Forest, Range and Watershed Management (FRWSM) organisation, which a 174 people sample of them studied through the stratified random sampling method. According to the results, Iranian society urgently needs to be informed about the advantages of conservation, renewal and development of natural resources. Three high effective extensional methods include “continuing to hold an annual festival called the national natural resources week”, “producing and broadcasting the advertising and educational TV programmes” and “holding public tours with contribution of NGOs, rural and urban Islamic Councils and local community leaders to visit pilot natural resources projects”. Paper suggests several hints to improve the current natural resources extension scheme.

September 2021

ABI Equity and Diversity Committee Communique

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For professional help with any mental health concerns or just to have someone to talk to:

Students: contact the Student Health and Counselling Service at 09 923 7681 or generalmanagerUHCS@auckland.ac.nz. Additionally, calling 1737 will put you through to the Need to Talk program to speak with a trained counsellor.

Staff: contact the Employee Assistance Program by calling 0800 327 669, emailing auckland@eapservices.co.nz or going to <https://www.eapservices.co.nz>.

How's Your Living/Working Situation in Lockdown?

For anyone with concerns over their mental and physical well-being, the space they're in, anyone who is not currently located in their normal residence and has concerns, or any other concerns, please reach out to the Equity and Diversity Committee: abiedc@auckland.ac.nz. We will keep your correspondence confidential and work with you to get in touch with a professional, talk with your line manager, or troubleshoot whatever we can with the ABI Executive Committee. Please get in touch.

Free Rec Centre Group Fitness Classes via Zoom

<https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/on-campus/facilities-and-services/sport-and-recreation/fitness/group-fitness.html>

Other Online Resources

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/assets/COVID-19/Real-time-Resilience-Strategies.pdf>

COVID-19 Support at ABI

<https://intranet.abi.auckland.ac.nz/en/covid-19.html>

Note this link will soon have information on the ABI's COVID student support fund. Check back in the coming days to find out more.

COVID-19 Support at UoA

<https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/news/notices/2021/covid-19.html>

<https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/students/student-support/remote-learning-support.html>

<https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/on-campus/accommodation/university-accommodation/resident-support/covid-19.html>

<https://www.staff.auckland.ac.nz/en/human-resources/staff-support-services/covid-19-coronavirus-outbreak.html>

Weekly Wellness Newsletter from Engineering:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1sJGHTqMthI7Au0dGfeoOvw1H2Ej5woY-6CIPR8zcQw4/edit>

Links for the ABI Equity and Diversity Committee material online:

<https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/abi/about-the-institute/our-institute/equity-diversity-at-abi.html>

<https://intranet.abi.auckland.ac.nz/en/committees-and-groups/equity-and-diversity-committee.html>

Resources for caregivers at UoA and the ABI:

<https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/abi/about-the-institute/our-institute/equity-diversity-at-abi/resources.html>