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## Research Question

What are the barriers of engagement between Samoan patients and the DDWMPHN in the Ipswich Area?

## Research Findings

**Culturally Appropriate Treatment:** Samoan cultural practices play a significant role in how Samoans seek treatment, as well as in how doctors in general practice will treat their Samoan patients.

**Language Proficiency:** Lower levels of English leaves more space for miscommunication, misinterpretation, resulting in a lack of understanding of medical diagnosis & medical terms. The use of Samoan interpreters would be welcome.

**Traditional Healing:** Samoan practices are often used including massage and herbal remedies. These are used in addition to, or as a replacement for Western treatments.

**Prioritising Health:** Cultural beliefs, where one's health is subordinate to the collective, often results in escalation of illness to a chronic level.

**Access to Services:** Samoan patients' access to health services are largely restricted by citizenship status and policies. Some are also unaware of services that are available, including whether they are eligible.

## Recommendations

**Cultural Liaisons:** A Samoan cultural liaison position within healthcare facilities to act as a translator, facilitator, and networker.

**Cultural Awareness Training:** Extend the current framework of cultural awareness training to include Samoan communities, and other significant demographics. Focus on facilitating genuine, judgement free discussions on traditional healing practices.

**Community Recruitment:** Utilise local churches, community gatherings & festivals to inform the community about health care. Actively recruit local Pacific Island school leavers for medical scholarships and internships. options and services.

**Collaborate** with pre-existing Pacific Island health programs from ECCQ and Queensland Health.

## Method

### Sampling through Gatekeepers

Interviewees were recruited through gatekeepers from both the Samoan Community and the Darling Downs and West Moreton Primary Health Network.

### Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted (n=10) with Samoan community members in the Ipswich area and health practitioners from Ipswich Hospital and Redbank Plains General Practice to gain open discussions and reflections based on experiences within the DDWMPHN.

### Thematic Analysis

Key emergent themes throughout the transcripts were categorised to identify barriers to engagement and provide relevant recommendations.

## Background

- There are 13536 Samoans in Queensland, 4863 of which were born in Samoa, and 9376 of which speak Samoan at home.
- The Samoan population within Australia tend to have poorer health outcomes than the Australian population as a whole. A significant Samoan population resides in the Darling Downs and West Moreton area near Ipswich.
- Therefore, this project sought to uncover the barriers to engagement between health practitioners and the Samoan population within this PHN.
- Efficient, engaging and culturally appropriate health services and treatments for patients are necessary to improve health outcomes and provide ongoing support for a population with lower health outcomes.

## Aims

- To assess the level of engagement of Samoan-Australian community (in the Ipswich area) within the DDWMPHN .
- To understand the relationship between cultural beliefs and practices among Samoan communities and medical treatment-seeking behaviours for Samoan patients.
- To find ways to engage the Samoan community positively and continuously within the Darling Downs and West Moreton Primary Health Network (DDWMPHN), through equal involvement (Samoan community groups and health practitioners).
- To find ways to foster cultural awareness and sensitivity amongst practitioners and the wider Private Health Network (PHN) in order to achieve more effective and efficient treatment.

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