

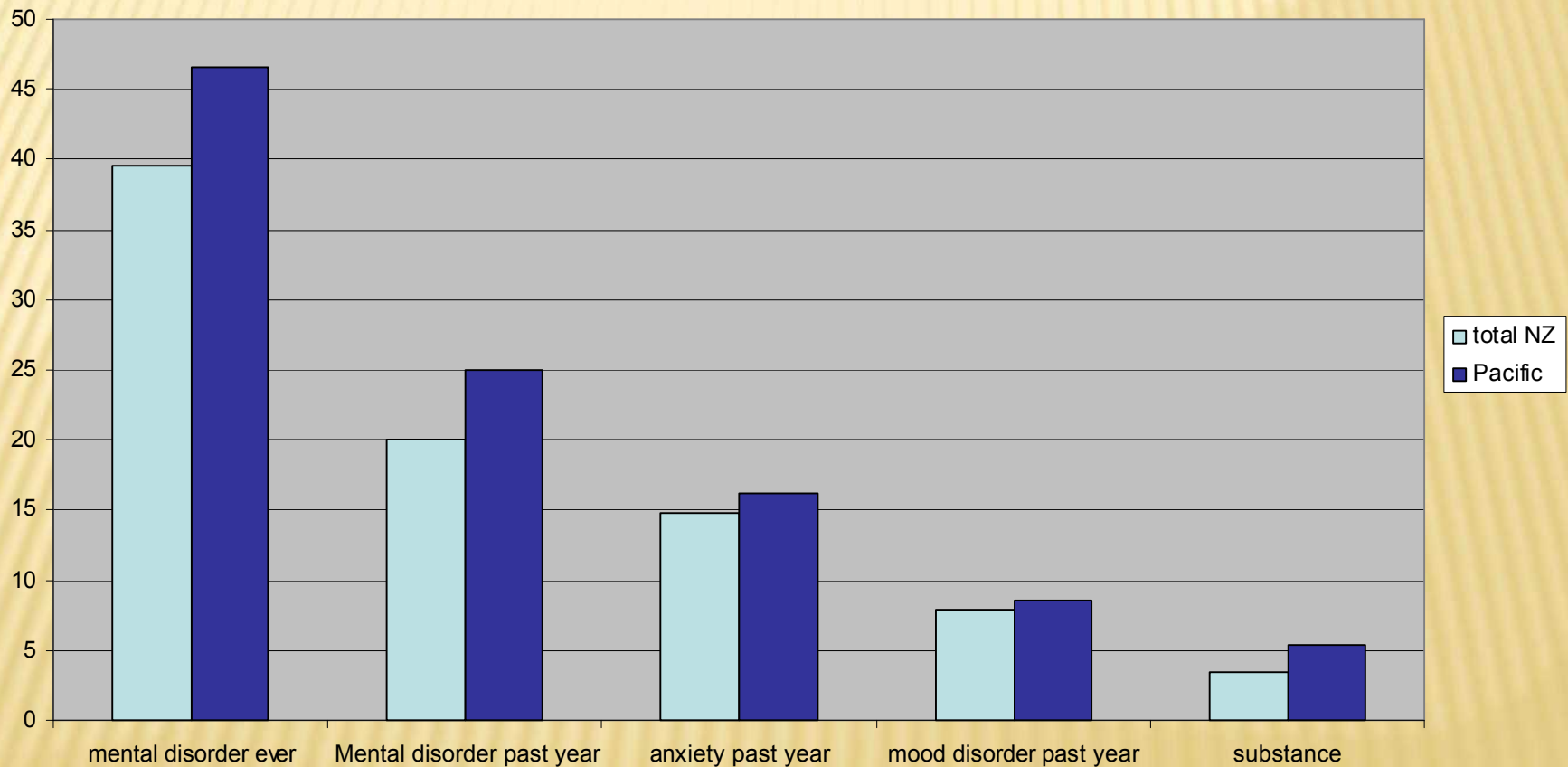
O TINA TAUMAFAI
CURRENT STATE OF PACIFIC MATERNAL AND
INFANT MENTAL HEALTH

OUTLINE

- ✘ Pacific population in NZ
- ✘ Concepts of mental health
- ✘ Post natal depression and impact on children
- ✘ Traditional beliefs around childbirth
- ✘ How big is the problem
- ✘ What can we do about it?

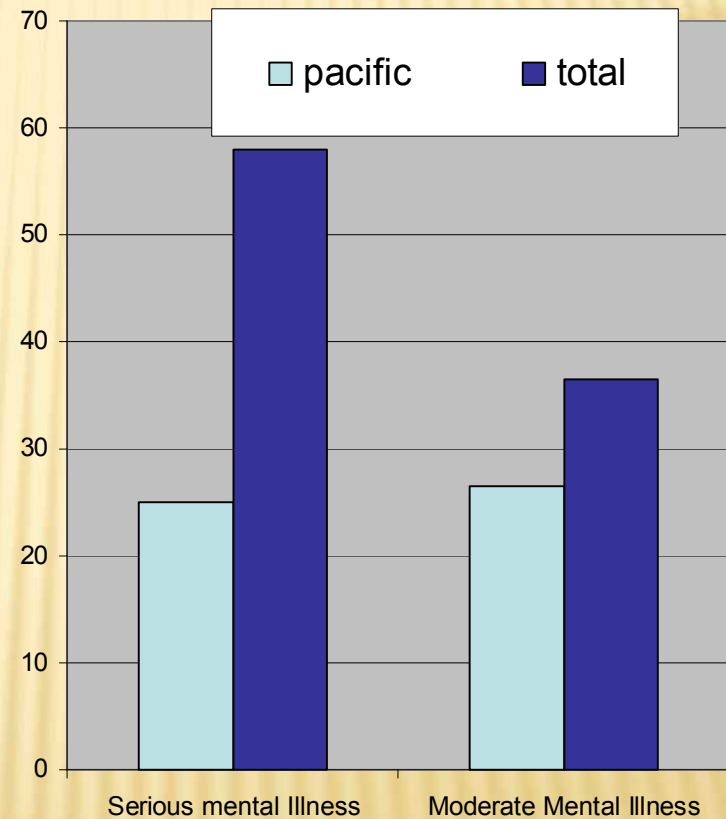
HOW BIG IS THE PROBLEM?

✘ Te Rau Hinengaro



SEEKING HELP

- ✘ Even when these are adjusted for age, education, gender and household income, the differences remain,



POST NATAL DEPRESSION

- ✘ PIFS found increased rates in Pacific women (16.4%) with alarming rates in Tongan women (30%) and rather low rates in Samoan women (7.6%)
- ✘ Methodological flaws
- ✘ Behavioural problems in children of depressed Pacific women at 2 years old

POST NATAL DEPRESSION

- ✘ EPDS validated in Tongan and Samoan women
- ✘ Small study, but rates look similar at around 28%
- ✘ Only one woman (out of 170) was actually under MHS
- ✘ Family cited as main reasons for distress as well as main source of support

✘ Ekeroma et al, NZMJ 2011

Impact on children

- ✘ Behavioural, cognitive and emotional problems in children at 2 years old
- ✘ Emotional and cognitive problems at age 7
- ✘ Impaired academic performance at age 16
- ✘ Increased depression at age 16
- ✘ Changes in cortisol
- ✘ Exacerbated by social adversity

IMPACT ON CHILDREN

- ✘ Harsh corporal punishment (not reaching extent of physical abuse) increases risk of mental illness, substance abuse and personality disorder in young adults (Afifi et al, 2012)
- ✘ Threat of being cast out appeared to have more impact than being hit per se, but two combined particularly distressing (Clement, 1974)
- ✘ Impact of maternal depression on violence towards children?

BELIEFS AROUND CHILDBIRTH

✘ Samoa

+ Prohibitions during pregnancy

- ✘ Being alone (aitu)

- ✘ Clothing

- ✘ Eating

+ Men not allowed round delivery (busy cooking!)

+ Fofu

+ Failele Gau



BELIEFS AROUND CHILDBIRTH

✘ Tonga

- + Taboo about shellfish
- + Burial of placenta (fonua)
- + Modesty
- + Kita

BELIEFS AROUND CHILDBIRTH

✘ Cook Islands

- + High NZ assimilation
- + Herbal laxative mixture
- + Food restrictions while breast feeding
- + Post partum illness



FAMILY

- ✘ Support from extended family very important
- ✘ Conflict between traditional values and research-based advice
- ✘ Preferred source of advice for Pacific women is their family (rather than professionals)
- ✘ Obligations/reciprocity

INFANTICIDE AND SUICIDE

- ✘ Alarming high rates in Samoa
- ✘ Virginty highly prized
- ✘ Suicide highest single cause of maternal death in NZ
- ✘ Rates in the islands grossly underreported

CURRENT STATE

- ✘ Specialist (mainstream) maternal (rather than parental) and infant mental health teams via DHBs
- ✘ Pacific cultural teams via DHBs
- ✘ No specific pacific PIMH
- ✘ ? Community initiatives (stigmatisation of mental health issues)

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- ✘ Engagement with existing specific maternal and infant mental health services appears to be poor
 - + Low rates of referral
 - + Difficulty engaging
 - ✘ CYF is ambulance (or paddy wagon) at the bottom of the cliff
 - ✘ Services experienced as irrelevant, unhelpful or punitive

WHERE TO?

- ✘ Interventions need to include family
- ✘ Some may be culturally challenging and need to be approached tactfully with understanding and without blaming or shaming
- ✘ Impact of religious beliefs and tradition
 - ✘ “Aua ne’i taofia le aoaiga i le tama; aua afai e te sasa ia te ia i se la’au, e le oti o ia; e te sasa ia te ia i se la’au, ona e laveaiina lea o lona agaga ai seoli”

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- ✘ Incorporation of emotional wellbeing in antenatal education
 - ✘ Education of providers (mental health and Pacific cultural competence)
 - ✘ Destigmatisation of mental health
 - ✘ Workforce development

SOIFUA!

