

Cytisine as an alternative smoking cessation product for Pacific smokers in NZ.

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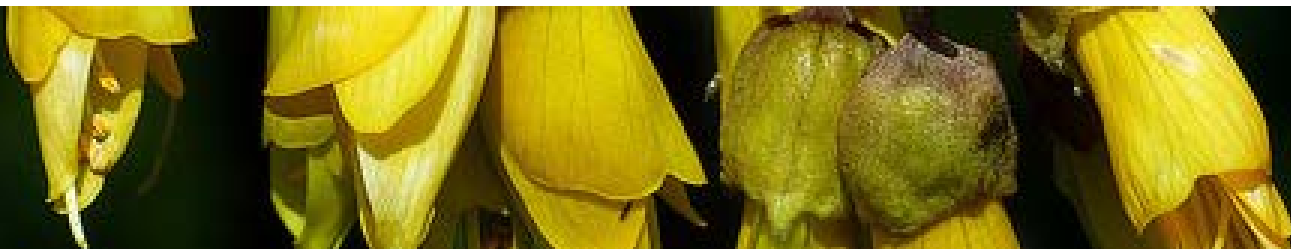


BACKGROUND



Cytisine is a plant-based alkaloid

- Typically extracted from the seeds of *Cytisus laborinum*
- Found in some plants in the Pacific region:
 - Hawaiian Māmane (*Sophora cyrsophylla*),
 - NZ Kōwhai (*Sophroa tetraptera*)
- Has similar properties to nicotine
- Acts as a partial agonist to the nicotine receptors
- Is more effective for smoking cessation than placebo and NRT
- Is significantly cheaper than other smoking cessation medications



METHODS

Qualitative study to investigate the acceptability of cytisine as an alternative smoking cessation product for Pacific smokers in NZ.

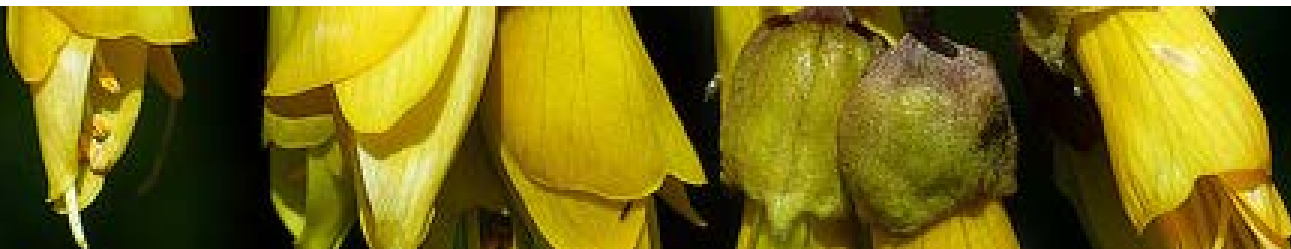
- 22% Pacific adults aged ≥ 15 years in 2016/17 smoked daily, vs 14% of the general population

Auckland: December 2015-January 2016

Semi-structured interviews with Pacific smokers, smoking cessation specialists and traditional healers, identified by snowball sampling.

RESULTS

Four Pacific smokers, three smoking cessation specialists. No traditional healers identified. Majority Samoan.



THEMES

Acceptability of using cytisine

Preference for it in liquid form (similar to traditional medicines):

- “vais [liquids] that we have for fofos [traditional healing]”
- Drying it and making “a lau ti [teabag] out of it”
- “getting it like a normal vegetable and blending it in ... as a juice” or a powder, “mixed in with some fruits”.

For some the tablet form had negative associations

- Illness focus rather than promoting health.

*“It’s a natural extract -
give it to me in its most
natural form”*

Pacific Smoker 4



THEMES

Barriers to using cytisine

One participant raised concerns about false advertising – undermining trust.
(European vs Pacific-sourced cytisine)

- In NZ: Relationship of rongoā rākau to pharmaceuticals, and intellectual property associated with indigenous flora
- Wai 262 treaty claim by Māori to rights in respect to Māori knowledge, and indigenous flora and fauna

“They might say it’s misleading. They’ll say cytisine yeah it’s in the kōwhai plant but it’s not the kōwhai plant that’s used for the cytisine we’re taking”

Pacific Cessation Specialist 2



CONCLUSION

- Cytisine is likely to be more acceptable to Pacific smokers than other smoking cessation products because of their cultural practices of traditional medicine and the natural product status of cytisine

Nosa V, Leau K, Walker N. Cytisine as an alternative smoking cessation product for Pacific smokers in New Zealand. Pacific Health Dialog 2018 [in press]

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