What do we know about family violence and sexual violence prevention in ethnic communities and what are the gaps in the evidence?

A rapid review of international and national evidence was completed to understand what works for the prevention of family violence and sexual violence (FVSV) in ethnic communities[1], as well as how government engages with these communities. Limitations and gaps from the evidence were also identified.

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International evidence and data shows that FVSV requires government collaboration in ethnic communities, and working in culturally responsive ways

A rapid evidence review of what works for the primary prevention of FVSV in ethnic communities looked at literature from several Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries. Two key questions were asked.

What works for primary prevention of FVSV in ethnic communities?

Target underlying drivers of violence
- Challenge gendered attitudes within communities by empowering women and using positive messaging to promote gender equality.
- Address attitudes condoning FVSV in culturally safe and appropriate ways.
- Strengthen social norms against FVSV and use positive messaging that supports healthy relationships.
- Understand and target social, cultural and economic factors through community discussions and wider collaborations to work towards systemic change.

Educate and raise awareness
- Raise awareness of FVSV and its existence within communities.
- Provide tailored and age-specific education on FVSV, people's rights and what constitutes a healthy and respectful relationship.

Work in culture-specific ways with communities
- Ensure those involved in prevention have a good understanding of the specific community and their needs. Any existing preconceptions about communities need to be challenged to support effective prevention.

Involve key community members
- Engage and train community and faith leaders, as they can set norms and behaviours against FVSV within their communities.

What works for engaging with ethnic communities to prevent FVSV?

Collaborate with community organisations and providers by being prepared and taking time to build trusting relationships
- Collaborate and co-design with the community, relevant organisations and community/faith leaders. Training should be provided to leaders and staff to build their capability and capacity.
- Engage men in the community by creating non-judgemental spaces.

Maximise engagement with ethnic communities
- Reach ethnic communities using community-specific media and settings, and using culturally relevant community-created positive messaging.

[1] Ethnic communities are a diverse group, including new and temporary migrants, former refugees, asylum seekers, long term settlers and people who were born in Aotearoa New Zealand (Ministry for Ethnic Communities definition, available online: https://www.ethniccommunities.govt.nz/our-communities/).
Please note that the preferred terminology for the Ethnic Communities Violence Prevention team at MSD is 'ethnically diverse communities', however at the time of this rapid evidence review it was not one of the key search terms.

Aotearoa New Zealand evidence highlights the need for community-led, government-enabled approaches for FVSV prevention

Existing evidence on FVSV in ethnic communities within Aotearoa New Zealand was synthesised

What works for the prevention of FVSV in ethnic communities in Aotearoa New Zealand?

- Community-led and community-specific approaches, which are government enabled, where communities take ownership of their challenges and solutions.
- Building trust in the community, building good networks and involving men.
- Encouraging men and youth to take leadership in prevention strategies.
- Culturally appropriate prevention, which can be supported through culturally sensitive training, the involvement of interpreters and encouragement for staff to recognise their own cultural assumptions and backgrounds.
- Building capacity and capability within ethnic communities.
- A whole-of-family strengths-based approach, including framing education, empowerment and awareness in terms of family safety rather than violence.
- Providing education and information about people's rights, healthy relationships, consent and sexual abuse.
- Focusing on long-term social change and strategies.

What is missing in the Aotearoa New Zealand family violence system for ethnic communities?

- Culturally appropriate family violence services and ethnic-specific service provision.
- Appropriate language support in family violence services.
- Resources and information targeted to ethnic communities.
- Connectivity between services available for ethnic communities and regional areas.
- Understanding of various cultural forms of violence.

What data is there on FVSV in ethnic communities in Aotearoa New Zealand?

- Administrative data identifies who goes through the Aotearoa New Zealand criminal justice system and the Oranga Tamariki system, which usually includes ethnicity information. It also details who accesses the Victims of Family Violence Visas.
- Census and survey data details the distribution of different aspects of wellbeing in the population, including for ethnic groups.

Numerous gaps and limitations were identified from the evidence, including a lack of evidence on the prevalence and experiences of FVSV within ethnic communities

What are the gaps in family violence in Aotearoa New Zealand?

- A lack of analysis related to specific ethnic groups due to ethnic classifications often grouping ethnically minoritised people as 'Asian' or 'Other'.
- Underreporting of family violence from members of ethnic communities meaning the rates of victimisation are likely higher than the reported data suggests. E.g there may be a strong cultural bias against reporting in Asian populations. This may be compounded by various complex issues and barriers, such as systemic obstacles and cultural norms.
- Limits on the ability to make robust estimates of the prevalence of family violence in ethnic communities due to the quality of the existing literature and data.
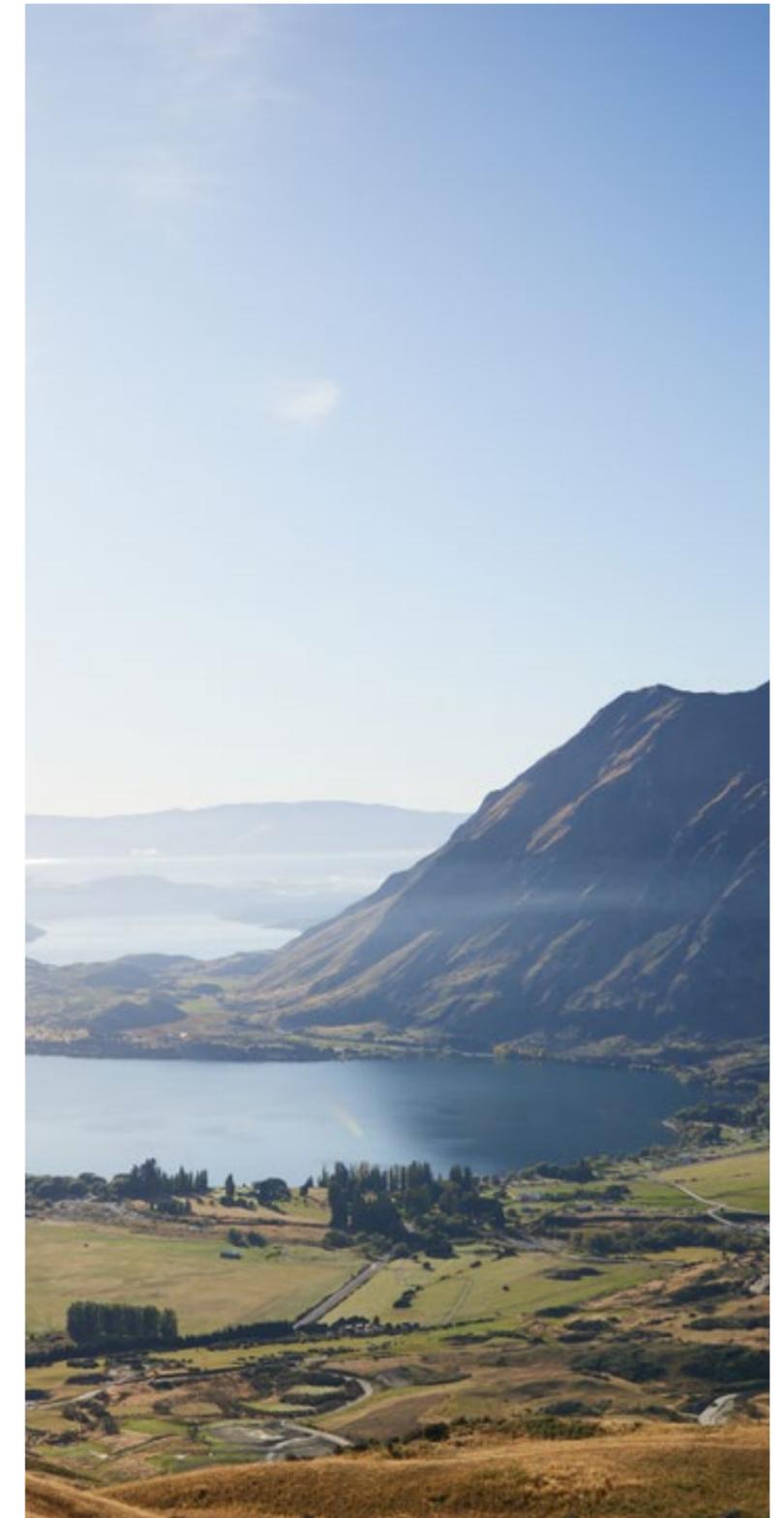
What are the gaps in the literature on what works for FVSV prevention in ethnic communities?

There was a lack of:
- Robust evidence on culturally safe approaches.
- Ethnic communities' visibility in national sexual violence policy making.
- Aotearoa New Zealand context-specific research on family violence among ethnic groups.
- Research on culturally specific forms of violence and how to prevent them, such as forced marriage and female genital mutilation.
- Research on ethnic community member experiences of the Aotearoa New Zealand family violence service system.
- Outcome data on the effectiveness of ethnic community family violence prevention initiatives.
- International literature on what works for government engagement with ethnic communities for FVSV prevention.
- Literature on what works for preventing:
  → FVSV against men, LGBTQIA+ and disabled people in ethnic communities.
  → Elder abuse and sibling violence in ethnic communities.

Key limitations of the rapid evidence review

- There may be limits to the transferability of findings to an Aotearoa New Zealand context, such as differing cultural contexts and histories in ethnic communities by country.
- There was a limited number of search terms and databases used.
- Only a selection of literature was examined from each search due to the time-limited nature of the review. This means that some key sources of evidence may have been missed.
- The cultural framing of the issues presented varied across the literature and authors.
- Evidence was reviewed between January and March 2023.

Findings from this rapid evidence review and synthesis were used to inform the Ministry of Social Development's Ethnic Communities Violence Prevention work programme. The review and synthesis took place between January and March 2023.

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Data sources for the full evidence map

Administrative data

Ministry of Social Development
· Total ethnicity reporting work programme

Ministry of Justice
· Protection order applications (2011-2020)
· Family violence programmes (2015/16-2021-22)
· Family violence offences (2015/16-2021-22)
· Offences related to family violence (2014/15-2021-22)

New Zealand Police
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· Victimisations (Demographics)

Corrections
· Volumes reports (2019-2020)
· Prison Facts and Statistics – September 2022

Immigration New Zealand
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Oranga Tamariki
· Substantiated findings of serious abuse (2013-2021)

Health Quality & Safety Commission
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Census and survey data

Statistics New Zealand
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· Population projections, density and diversity (Auckland)
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Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment
· Settling In New Zealand Migrant Survey Trends from 2015 to 2019
  Rangahau te Korou o te Ora / Quality of Life Survey 2022

Ministry of Justice
· New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey Cycle 4 (November 2020-November 2021)

Ministry of Health New Zealand
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Ministry of Social Development
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Research and evaluation data

· Ministry of Social Development (10: 2006-2022)
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· Ministry for Women (2: 2011a, 2011b)
· Ministry of Justice (2: 2017a, 2017b)
· Immigration New Zealand (1: 2019)
· Office of the Auditor-General (1: 2021)

Data from and about the sector

Te Puna Aonui
· Analysis of engagements for Te Aorerekura
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Shakti
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Shama
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Gandhi Nivas
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Women's Refuge
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Indicators, dashboards, and reports

Taskforce for Action Against Violence within Families
· Family Violence Indicators (2011)

Social Policy Evaluation and Research Unit (Superu)
· Family Violence Indicators (2013)

Ministry for Ethnic Communities
· Towards Freedom from Violence (2013)
· Ethnic Communities Data Dashboard

Ministry of Social Development
· Social Report (2016)

Statistics New Zealand
· Ngā Tūtohu Aotearoa: Indicators Aotearoa New Zealand

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· Wellbeing Report (2022)

Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
· Child and Youth Wellbeing Indicators (2022)