



# The New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study



## Social Support amongst Adult Pacific Peoples in New Zealand, 2014

Social support is highly valued in Pacific Island communities. It only takes time spent at a family meal or a community event to see the true extent

of social connectedness (Statistics New Zealand and Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 2011). Whilst little thought is given to the term *social support*; it remains an integral component for sustaining communities, enhancing health and wellbeing, and improving outcomes for at risk individuals – especially in relation to suicide.

*“Pacific Peoples living in New Zealand, aged 18 to 25 reported the highest levels of social support”*

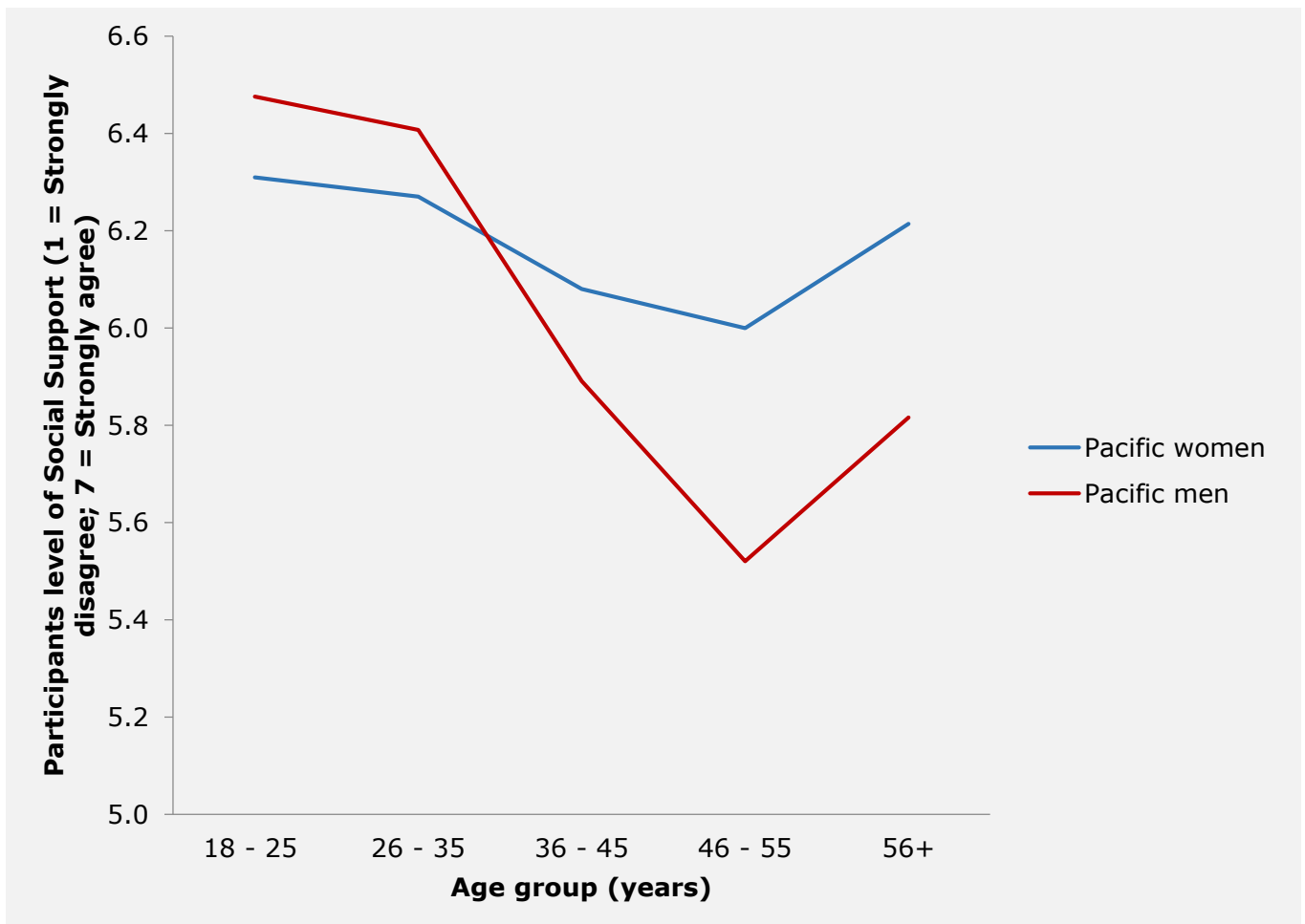


Figure 1. Participants' response to the statement 'There are people I can depend on to help me if I really need it'. (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree)

*“Pacific women of all age groups reported relatively high levels of social support”*

#### LEVELS OF SOCIAL SUPPORT

During the 2013/14 data collection of the New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study (NZAVS), 18,264 participants were asked about the level of social support they feel they have with the following statement:

**There are people I can depend on to help me if I really need it.**

Participants were asked to rate this statement on a 7-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating ‘Strongly Disagree’ and 7 indicating ‘Strongly Agree’. Of all participants who responded to the above statement (n=18,264), 625 identified as belonging to a Pacific Island ethnic group.

*“...For Pacific men, age matters. Younger Pacific men reported high levels of social support, on par with the high social support experienced by Pacific women...”*

#### How does social support differ by age?

The results show that of those participants who provided a full response to the statement, “There are people I can depend on to help me if I really need it” and who identified as belonging to a Pacific Island ethnic group:

- The highest levels of social support were reported by those aged 18 to 25 years.
- The lowest levels of social support were reported by those aged 46 to 55 years.

*“...Older Pacific men, in contrast, reported the lowest level of social support, lower than women and lower than younger Pacific men...”*

#### How does social support differ by gender?

The results show that of those participants who provided a full response to the statement, “There are people I can depend on to help me if I really need it” and who identified as belonging to a Pacific Island ethnic group:

- Pacific women of all age groups reported relatively high levels of social support (lowest rating = 6.0, highest rating = 6.3).
- Younger Pacific men (18-25) reported the highest levels of social support (rating = 6.5). Older Pacific men (46-55), in contrast, reported the lowest level of social support (rating = 5.5).



## SUMMARY

- Approximately 3 out of 4 (76%) adult Pacific Peoples in New Zealand tend to strongly agree (rating a 6 or 7) that there are people they can depend on to help them if they really need it.
- Highest levels of perceived social support were prevalent among Pacific men aged 18 to 25 years (rating = 6.5).
- Lowest levels of perceived social support were prevalent among Pacific men aged 46 to 55 years (rating = 5.5).
- A limitation of the NZAVS data is not having a large enough sample of Pacific peoples to break down social support by Pacific Island ethnic groups represented in New Zealand. However, despite the diversity of Pacific peoples, levels of social support are presented more broadly in this report.

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## REFERENCES

Statistics New Zealand and Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs (2011). Health and Pacific peoples in New Zealand. Wellington: Statistics New Zealand and Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs

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NZAVS Policy Brief

Suggested citation: Kapeli, S. A., Steiner-Fox, H. W., Dutt, S. J., Christiansen, S. J., Newton, H. J., Matika, C. M., Lindsay, C., & Sare, M. H. (2016). Social support amongst adult Pacific Peoples in New Zealand, 2014. *NZAVS Policy Brief, 5*.



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