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## **THE CRITICAL ROLE OF WHAKAPAPA IN POPULATION ACCURACY**

### *Coursework summary*

The fundamental aspect of Māori identity is whakapapa (genealogy), which literally requires blood-ancestry to Māori people and links through their tīpuna (ancestors) to this land. Thus, accuracy and understanding populations in terms of recognizing and accepting their cultural and ethical identity are crucial.

In healthcare, data scientists must understand the characteristics of every entity in a population as a statistical pool for data-handling correctly. When identity is incorrectly represented, it can lead to significant errors in how healthcare data is interpreted and used, potentially resulting in incorrect or even harmful consequences for Māori health outcomes.

Defining populations for healthcare funding and service provision requires a careful consideration of whakapapa ensuring that healthcare services are appropriately funded and that all the members of Māori communities, regardless of how they are classified in official records, receive the care they need.

Therefore, it is very important to engage in communication with leaders of the Māori community to avoid misrepresenting or misunderstanding identity. This engagement helps ensure a correct match, even when narrower definitions are in use, avoids biases that could lead to underfunding or misallocation of healthcare resources, supports the well-being of Māori and ensures that health services are culturally appropriate.