Social deprivation in Aotearoa New Zealand

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Abstract:
The Children’s Commissioner (2010) suggested the current poverty statistics and the Child Poverty Action Group’s work indicated that approximately 170,000 children in Aotearoa New Zealand live in poverty. Increasing numbers of children are living in poverty; in poor housing, with poor health, low school attendance rates hence low education achievement; and increasing youth with drug and alcohol problems, high truancy rates, increasing mental health problems, and an escalating prison population. This is despite increased government expenditure to overcome these problems. Why in an affluent society is a large proportion of the population living without the basic necessities of life, and an ability to participate in society? This study evolved out of concern toward increased social deprivation in Aotearoa New Zealand, despite increased government spending on its public service programmes. Although no widely accepted definition of social deprivation in Aotearoa New Zealand exists, New Zealand Treasury (2009) refers to deprivation as a multi-dimensional concept, with a distinction made between ‘material’ and ‘social’ deprivation. With the latter more difficult to establish and measure, the operational measures of social deprivation are less developed.

Presenter: Brian Harcourt