

# 2011 International Symposium on Poetry and Medicine

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Medical Teaching Centre  
Building 37  
University of Warwick  
Gibbet Hill Campus, CV4 7AL, UK

## ABSTRACT



**Title: In our own words: Poetry and Young People's Health in New Zealand**

**Author: Renee Liang, Auckland, New Zealand**

Community-based arts and performance have been gaining increasing attention internationally, as cost-effective and organic ways of engaging with disempowered communities. One of those communities are at-risk youth (eg, those lost to mainstream education or who have already had contact with police and social services). Poetry, along with other forms of performance and art-making, have been used in Auckland, NZ, to engage with young people during intensive holiday programs. Although frequently used by both mainstream (funded) programs and at grassroots level, analysis of their impact is rare. The results of a study on a 2006 program, An Absolute Rush, will be presented along with visuals, text and audio of spoken word produced by youth during that program. The study was done while the presenter was a registrar in Adolescent Health during the final year of her specialist training and specifically addressed the impact of the program on young people's health. This will be followed by a brief summary of other youth-arts programs the author has been involved in since, and what is currently happening in Auckland in terms of CCD (Community Creative Development) and young people.