

## **How can understanding the placebo and nocebo response improve our treatments?**

Professor Keith J. Petrie, University of Auckland

Placebo and nocebo effects play a crucial role in medical and psychological interventions, influencing both treatment efficacy and the occurrence of adverse effects. While traditional clinical trials have sought to minimize placebo responses, recent research highlights the potential of harnessing placebo effects to enhance treatment outcomes. Also, if we can mitigate nocebo effects, we may be able to reduce negative side effects and improve persistence with treatment regimens. Achieving these goals requires a deeper understanding of the psychological and neurobiological mechanisms underlying these responses, particularly the role of expectations.

This talk will explore the impact of placebo and nocebo effects in healthcare, discuss their underlying mechanisms, and examine strategies to optimize placebo responses and minimize nocebo effects. The talk will also highlight promising directions for future research in the psychological area aimed at improving patient outcomes.