



E-Male Matters

November and December 2020

The newsletter of the Men's Health Forum in Ireland

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News

Men's Health Week 2021 - Get the Date into your New Diary!

The current joke doing the rounds is that anyone who bought a 2020 diary was mis-sold it, and should, therefore, be able to claim compensation (as COVID-19 kicked everyone's meeting plans out of the ball park). However, despite this, Men's Health Week 2020 was still one of the biggest and best ever held in Ireland!

But, believe it or not, it's that time again. Yes, it's time to get the most important date of the year into your new 2021 diary ... [International Men's Health Week](#) (MHW) always begins on the Monday before Father's Day and ends on Father's Day itself. This coming year, it will run from **Monday 14th until Sunday 20st June 2021**.

Every year, the Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) convenes an all-island Planning Group for MHW. Would you be interested in joining with others from across the island of Ireland to help to shape MHW 2021? ... This can be done in many ways - from participating in meetings to electronic communication. All input is very welcome, and helps to make the week stronger and more relevant.

The first meeting of the Planning Group will take place in early January via a 'Zoom' video call. But even if you can't make this meeting, your feedback on developments via email / phone would still be very helpful. If you would be interested in being part of the planning process for 2021 (in any way), email Colin Fowler at: colin@mhfi.org

However, even if this is not possible, why not put the dates of MHW 2021 into your new diary, and start thinking about how your group / workplace / church / community / sports club ... could do something to mark this week? It's never too early to start planning.

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Launch of Men's Health in Numbers

The [Men's Health Forum in Ireland](#) (MHFI) was established in response to the growing recognition of the need to address the poor health status of males in Ireland. However, one of the first challenges facing it was to gain access to reliable data upon which to plan future interventions. This remains an ongoing concern - as the Forum seeks to work in an evidence informed way.

This barrier was, initially, overcome when MHFI launched its seminal 'Men's Health in Ireland' report in January 2004 (www.mhfi.org/fullreport.pdf). This document provided the most comprehensive overview of key statistics on men's health on the island of Ireland ever collated up to that time.

To mark its twenty-first birthday in 2020, the Forum undertook 'Men's Health in Numbers'. Funded by the Health Service Executive's Health and Wellbeing Division, this sought to produce:

1. A comprehensive **Trends Report** that describes, in detail, changes in significant markers of men's health on the island of Ireland in the last twenty years.
2. An infographically-driven **Men's Health Report Card** that provides a lay person's synopsis of contemporary key men's health statistics in the Republic of Ireland.

These were officially launched at a webinar held on Thursday 10th December 2020, and you are invited to download a free copy of each at:

- Trends Report - <https://www.mhfi.org/MensHealthInNumbers1.pdf>
- Report Card 2020 - <https://www.mhfi.org/MensHealthInNumbers2.pdf>

A full recording of the launch is also available on YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/WwHZdF2OQLg>

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Minding Your Wellbeing Programme

The COVID pandemic has had a huge impact upon the mental health of everyone across Ireland. The 'Minding Your Wellbeing Programme' (from the [Health Service Executive's Health and Wellbeing Division](#)) provides a unique opportunity for people to learn more about the key elements of mental wellbeing - such as mindfulness, gratitude, self-care, staying connected and resilience. It also provides simple practical tools and guidance for people to develop and maintain a positive outlook. A new series of five online videos has been produced, and these are available at: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLItgannkj2UHEc7ELQpgT6--mN4PRmzpU>

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New Podcast Channel for Belfast Men's Health Group

[Belfast Men's Health Group](#) has recently branched out into the world of podcasting, and have set-up their own channel at: <https://belfastmenshealthgroup.podbean.com> The first two clips feature Professor Joe O'Sullivan (Centre for Cancer Research and Cell Biology, Queen's University Belfast) and Dr Mark Davies, (Consultant Clinical Psychologist, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust).

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Recording of International Men's Day 2020 Webinar

To mark [International Men's Day](#) (IMD) on the 19th of November 2020, HSE Health and Wellbeing - supported by the Men's Health Forum in Ireland and the National Centre for Men's Health in IT Carlow - organised a webinar which explored the impact of COVID-19 upon the health and wellbeing of men and boys. This free event: attracted 714 registrants; specifically focused upon the difficulties facing farmers, older men and young men; and included a mix of research presentations, personal experiences and panel discussion. To view a recording of this event, please visit: <https://youtu.be/xK0JhhIShvQ> PDF copies of the speakers' presentations can be downloaded from: <https://www.mhfi.org/coronavirus.html>

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New Directions

Coping after someone you care about has been sent to prison can be very distressing. Families can be affected in all kinds of different ways. Typical of the challenges to be faced are: coming to terms with this situation, and needing support and advice in coping with this new reality; dealing with the complex mixture of feelings and emotions experienced, as well as the financial, social and parenting issues which arise; getting to know how the prison system operates; maintaining contact and a sense of relationship; planning for release ... Situated in Dublin, [New Directions](#) is a new initiative which aims to offer a free, confidential, information and support service for families affected by imprisonment. It offers a listening ear and emotional support to help families with the challenges that they face. Services are provided by trained and experienced staff in a safe and welcoming environment. Find out more at: <http://familiesofprisoners.ie>

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Act F.A.S.T.

When someone has a stroke, minutes matter - because two million brain cells die every minute after a stroke! To learn about the signs of a stroke, and how to act FAST, visit: <https://youtu.be/WckB15sJ9r4>

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Health and Wellbeing Podcasts

A series of health and wellbeing podcasts have been recorded for Offaly and Laois, covering a wide range of topics relevant to everyday life. 'Offaly Talks' and 'Laois Connects' podcasts have been developed in partnership with Offaly Local Development Company, Laois Partnership Company, HSE Resource Office for Suicide Prevention (Laois Offaly), and HSE Health Promotion and Improvement (Midlands Louth Meath CHO). They feature a wide range of interesting topics with frontline staff working across the statutory, community and voluntary sectors. These are available on all main podcast apps including PodBean, Spotify and Apple Play. Check them out at Offaly Talks Podcasts: <https://www.offalyldc.ie/offaly-talks-podcasts> | Laois Connects Podcasts: <https://laoispartnership.ie/laois-connects-podcasts>

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COVID and Traveller Men

To mark [International Men's Day](#) 2020, Traveller men from Pavee Point talked about how the COVID lockdown had affected their health, and about the positive steps they were taking to overcome this. Hear their stories at ...

<https://www.facebook.com/paveepointireland/videos/665128827509753>

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Training

'Mood Matters' and 'Living Life to the Full'

[Aware NI](#) is offering two of their workshops online in the New Year: (i) 'Mood Matters' is a light and interactive, two hour, mental health awareness training session which offers participants an opportunity to think about how to look after their own mental health. It explores mental health stereotypes, and looks more closely at how to spot the early signs of mental health issues. This session also teaches participants: coping skills for everyday life; how to avoid getting caught in a vicious circle; how to break unhelpful habits; and where to get further help and support. For more information, see: <https://aware-ni.org/mood-matters-for-adults> (ii) 'Living Life to the Full' (six weeks by two hours per week) looks more closely at the ways in which mental health can be impacted by life events and unhelpful thinking styles - which may then also affect our physical health and overall enjoyment of life. This programme explores a different topic each week. Find out more at: <https://aware-ni.org/living-life-to-the-full>

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Managing the Safety Risks of Employee Intoxicants

The Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) has declared that workplace mental health is now a safety issue, and that its members are well placed to respond. IOSH is urging its members to think safety, compliance, risk assessments, and employee support therapy to address the mental health issues that are now impacting the workplace. Information given by the Health and Safety Authority is that, from a health and safety perspective, companies need to be confident that employees are not a risk to themselves or others. If managers perceive that there is a risk, action should be taken to remove the employee from the risk. During this course (being held in January and February 2021), attendees will explore: developing intoxicant policies and procedures; conducting a workplace intoxicant risk assessment; European Workplace Drug Testing Society guidelines on drug testing. Find out more at: <https://eapinstitute.com/events/managing-the-safety-risks-of-employee-intoxicant-use>

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Research

What Works for Men?

COVID-19 has had a devastating effect upon all of us - and, for some, more than others. Living Well Together (Newry, Mourne and Down Community Planning Partnership) want to help people who are out of work to get back in, but recognise that they need to find better ways of doing this for more people. Many old jobs won't be coming back, but new opportunities will come forward. More people will need to re-train and develop new skills, but fewer men take up opportunities in education and re-training. 'What Works for Men?' is an initiative which seeks to ask men about the things that can help to get them into work, and to design better local support services. Men are invited to: complete surveys; share their ideas and stories; join a discussion forum. To find out more, visit: www.livingwelltogethernmd.org

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If He Can See It, Will He Be It? Representations of Masculinity in Boys' Television

The purpose of this report was to examine messages about masculinity present in popular television programming among boys aged seven to thirteen. Much of the existing research on gender representation in children's television has focused on girls and women. However, far less is known about depictions of masculinity in contemporary children's programming. Media

representations of masculinity have real world effects on the wellbeing and behaviour of boys and men, and can impact their beliefs/behaviours. Media has the power to challenge limiting masculine norms in ways that support men's reduced engagement in violence and self-injurious behaviours, and improve their health and happiness. Download the report at: <https://promundoglobal.org/resources/if-he-can-see-it-will-he-be-it-representations-of-masculinity-in-boys-television>

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Male Victims of Coercive Control

Currently, there are few studies which examine the experiences of male victims of coercive control. Deborah Powney and Prof Nicola Graham-Kevan of the University of Central Lancashire have, therefore, launched a new international survey - translated into several languages - exploring this area. Their survey aims to evaluate the experiences of male victims arising from psychological, emotional, financial and sexual coercion. Details on the survey can be accessed at: https://uclan.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6rEoyAUolAUn8SV

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Dementia in the Minds of Characters and Readers

In this new project, Gemma Carney and Paula Devine (from [ARK](#)) are working with Jane Lugea (School of Arts, English and Languages at [Queen's University Belfast](#)) to investigate how the language of contemporary fiction represents the minds of characters with dementia. The research includes mind style analysis of fictional texts, to explore how the language represents the cognitive experience of these characters i.e. their mind styles. A series of reading groups will investigate how readers respond to these mind styles. Find out more at: <https://blogs.qub.ac.uk/dementiafiction>

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Male Sex Identified by Global COVID-19 Meta-Analysis as a Risk Factor for Death and Intensive Treatment Unit Admission

Anecdotal evidence suggests that COVID-19 exhibits differences in morbidity and mortality between sexes. This journal article presents a meta-analysis of 3,111,714 reported global cases to demonstrate that, whilst there is no difference in the proportion of males and females with confirmed COVID-19, male patients have almost three times the odds of requiring Intensive Treatment Unit (ITU) admission and higher odds of death compared to females. With few exceptions, the sex bias observed in COVID-19 is a worldwide phenomenon. How sex is influencing COVID-19 outcomes will have important implications for clinical management and mitigation strategies for this disease: <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-020-19741-6>

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Web Links

Men's Issues on the Web ...

[Waterford Sports Partnership: be your personal best campaign for men](#) [video]

[A better way forward: towards a zero-COVID island](#)

[MP questions why no 'minister for men' exists in UK government](#)

[How the pandemic is strengthening fathers' relationships with their children](#)

[No man left behind](#)

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Next Edition

Do you know of anything (research, events, resources, news etc.) affecting men and boys which should be included in the next edition of 'E-Male Matters'?

There's a simple format for all articles. Let us know (within one paragraph and no more than 150 words) all the crucial details e.g. title, date, time, venue, short description, contact details for further information (name, telephone and/or email address), and web link (if available) for a fuller explanation. To keep the file size of this newsletter small, we cannot, unfortunately, accept photographs or images.

Please email your information to: emalematters@mhfi.org

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E-Male Matters is also available online at:
www.mhfi.org/newsletters/about-e-male-matters.html

The views expressed in E-Male Matters are not, necessarily, those of the Men's Health Forum in Ireland

