

# E-Male Matters

*January and February 2021*

The newsletter of the Men's Health Forum in Ireland

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## News

### Men's Health in Numbers

To mark its twenty-first birthday in 2020, the [Men's Health Forum in Ireland](#) (MHFI) undertook a research project titled '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 in December 2020, and you are invited to download a free copy of each publication at ...

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

With the support of the Carers Team in the [Belfast Health and Social Care Trust](#), MHFI is, currently, working on producing a Northern Ireland version of the Report Card. This will be ready later this year.

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

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## Make the Connections - Men's Health Week 2021

[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 14<sup>th</sup> until Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

Since the start of January 2021, an all-island Planning Group for MHW (convened by the [Men's Health Forum in Ireland](#)) has been meeting and corresponding to finalise the theme and develop resources for the week. A lot has been achieved.

This year, MHW on the island of Ireland will focus upon '*making the connections*' and the call to action will be:

- **CHECK IN** with yourself to see how you are coping / feeling, and to identify any health worries that you might have.
- **CHECK UP** on your family, friends, neighbours, colleagues to see how they're doing and to offer support.
- If you notice anything worrying or which needs attention, **CHECK IT OUT** and seek information / help / support / treatment.

Make sure that you have the dates in your diary and are thinking about how you might do something to mark this week. It's never too early to start planning. Have a look at what took place last year to give you an idea of what is possible: <https://www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2020.html>

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## WHO Guidelines on Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour

The [World Health Organisation](#) (WHO) guidelines on physical activity and sedentary behaviour provide evidence-based public health recommendations for children, adolescents, adults and older adults on the amount of physical activity (frequency, intensity and duration) required to offer significant health benefits and mitigate health risks. For the first time, recommendations are provided on the associations between sedentary behaviour and health outcomes, as well as for sub-populations, and people living with chronic conditions or disability. Download the guidelines at: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240015128>

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## Global Action on Men's Health eBulletin

[Global Action on Men's Health](#) (GAMH) is a collaborative project that brings together men's health organisations worldwide. GAMH produces regular eBulletins for its members and others interested in its work. If you would like to subscribe to the free eBulletin, or to see past copies, visit: <http://gamh.org/ebulletin>

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## Belfast Men's Health Group Podcast with Malachi Cush

[Belfast Men's Health Group](#) has recently recorded a podcast with Malachi Cush. Malachi is a singer-songwriter from County Tyrone - who many will remember as a performer on the first ever series of BBC's 'Fame Academy'. In this podcast, he talks about the community he grew up in, his background, his career, and his plans for the future. He also talks about mental health and wellbeing in the world of musicians during the current COVID-19 situation. Listen in at: <https://belfastmenshealthgroup.podbean.com>

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## Events

### Like a New Man

You are invited to join an online discussion hosted by the [South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust's](#) Men's Health Network to explore men's health in the next two years. This will take place on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2021, from 9.30am - 11.00am. The guest speakers are: Dr Noel Richardson (Director of the National Centre for Men's Health in IT Carlow); Hannah Williamson (Health and Wellbeing Coordinator, Northern Ireland Chest Heart and Stroke); and Gerry McElwee (Head of Cancer Prevention, Cancer Focus Northern Ireland). To register for a place, Email: [brien.frazer@setrust.hscni.net](mailto:brien.frazer@setrust.hscni.net)

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### Will the Covid-19 Pandemic Help us Rethink Loneliness and Social Isolation?

Loneliness is emerging as a key public health challenge for the population during the Covid-19 pandemic. Evidence shows that it is a significant issue for population health - as people who experience loneliness have a poorer overall quality of life and physical and mental health. Register now for an [Institute of Public Health](#) webinar focusing upon the impact of Covid-19 on loneliness on the island of Ireland. This will take place on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021, between 11.00am and 12.15pm. At this event, you will hear from leading experts and community organisations about the evidence, policy and challenges for public health. To book a place, visit: [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_d5XYgGcFTgWpF8NMkQg-cg](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_d5XYgGcFTgWpF8NMkQg-cg)

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### Quitting is Winning

To mark 'National No Smoking Day' on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2021, the HSE would like to invite you to a webinar from Noon - 1.00pm. National No Smoking Day is an opportunity to highlight how far we have come in relation to de-normalising tobacco use in Ireland, and to call on all sectors of society to support the next steps. People who smoke are more likely to get COVID-19, and risk having a more severe infection compared to those who don't smoke. Now, more than ever, it is vitally important to collectively take actions to protect respiratory health at a population level. Preventing tobacco initiation, and helping those who do smoke to successfully quit, is the most effective way of achieving this. Register for a place at: <https://bit.ly/3p227D6>

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### Do you Know a Man Living with Cancer?

[Look Good Feel Better](#) is offering a 'Zoom' workshop for men on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2021, from 1.00pm to 3.00pm. This will be hosted by men's grooming expert, Mark Sproston, aka 'The Shave Doctor'. This workshop will offer practical advice, as well as providing a safe place for men to connect with other men with a cancer diagnosis. Special guest speaker, Jack Bell, from Derby County Football Club Community Trust, will deliver a short talk on: the role and the importance of physical activity; how physical activity can reduce the side effects of cancer and treatment; ideas for how you can increase exercise levels. Jack works closely with [Macmillan Cancer Support](#) and is happy to take some questions after the session. To book a place, or for more information, email: [info@lqfb.co.uk](mailto:info@lqfb.co.uk) or Tel: 0754 5551531.

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## Training

### Connections Link Life Training Course

People in Northern Ireland are invited to apply for a free place on an online suicide prevention awareness course. This programme will be held in each of the Health Trust areas over the coming months. The programme covers: (i) factors that lead to poor mental health, emotional distress and suicide; (ii) the role of mental health and emotions in relation to suicide prevention awareness; (iii) the 'Connect 4-Way Model' for helping persons experiencing emotional distress or suicide'; (iv) tools and resources for support in your community; and (v) the role of self-care and wellbeing in strengthening mental health and preventing suicide. Find out more at:

[https://freshmindseducation.com/pha-link\\_life](https://freshmindseducation.com/pha-link_life)

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### Take Control with Stress Control

Find out how to join the [HSE's](#) online Stress Control programme for March 2021 at: <https://stresscontrol.ie> This site also offers resources such as information booklets and relaxation / mindfulness techniques.

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

[Aware NI](#) is offering two of their workshops online: (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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### Men's Mental Health Course

As part of the cross-border 'Innovation Recovery' education for mental health programme, you are invited to join an online men's health session on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2021, from 11.00am to Noon. If you're interested, Tel: 028 7186 5149 (NI) | 087 409 8630 (RoI) or Email: [recoverycollegewest@westerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:recoverycollegewest@westerntrust.hscni.net) (NI) | [Innovation.RecoverySouth@hse.ie](mailto:Innovation.RecoverySouth@hse.ie) (RoI).

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## Research

### The COVID-19 Sex-Disaggregated Data Tracker

Tracking differences in COVID-19 infection, illness and death among women and men is essential to understanding the pandemic. The COVID-19 Sex-Disaggregated Data Tracker is the world's largest database of sex-disaggregated data on COVID-19. It is produced by [Global Health 50/50](#), the [African Population and Health Research Center](#) and the [International Center for Research on Women](#). Together, they are investigating what roles sex and gender are

playing in the outbreak, building the evidence base of what works to tackle gender disparities in health outcomes, and advocating for effective gender-responsive approaches to COVID-19. See how different countries are affected at: <https://globalhealth5050.org/the-sex-gender-and-covid-19-project>

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### **Altered Lives in a Time of Crisis: The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Lives of Older Adults in Ireland**

[TILDA](#) is a large-scale longitudinal study that collects information on the health, economic and social situation of a nationally representative sample of 8,504 older community-dwelling adults in Ireland and looks at how their circumstances change. When the COVID-19 pandemic reached Ireland in March 2020, TILDA was uniquely positioned to document the impact the pandemic had on the lives of older adults. With the support of the Health Research Board, TILDA surveyed 4,000 of its existing participants between July and November 2020. The TILDA COVID-19 report covers a range of aspects of the lives of adults aged 60 years and older during the first few months of the pandemic. As well as information on changes to normal activities due to social distancing and other restrictions on social interactions, it examines how these alterations to peoples' lives impacted on their physical and mental wellbeing. See the report at: <https://tilda.tcd.ie/publications/reports/pdf/c19-key-findings-report/COVID-19%20Key%20Findings%20Report.pdf>

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### **Older Men and Barriers to Seeking Psychological Help**

Jenna Garity, a final year Psychology Student in University College Cork, is conducting a piece of research which examines older (60+ years) Irish men's experience of looking for psychological help, including barriers and mediators. She is, currently, looking for volunteers to interview. Participants will be asked to take part in a one-to-one interview online with a member of the research team. This will be audio-recorded, and is expected to take 15-20 minutes to complete. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and, should you choose to do so, you can refuse to answer specific questions or decide to withdraw from the interview at any time. Once the interview has concluded, you can still choose to withdraw your details in the subsequent two weeks. To find out more, contact the researcher by email: [118706269@umail.ucc.ie](mailto:118706269@umail.ucc.ie)

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### **Patient and Client Council Research**

The COVID-19 pandemic had a major impact upon health and social care in Northern Ireland during 2020. The [Patient and Client Council](#) is keen to hear how the pandemic affected your health care or social care, and how appropriate and effective you feel the Health and Social Care (HSC) response to COVID-19 has been. You are invited to take part in a survey to evaluate the HSC response to COVID-19 from the perspective of a service user. For more information, see: <https://patientclientcouncil.hscni.net/novel-coronavirus/https-wh1-snapsurveys-com-s-aspk160855003903>

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### **Engaging Men Earlier**

Speaking directly to men, the [Samaritans](#) sought to discover how to appeal to and engage men before they reach a crisis point. Their new handbook, 'Engaging Men Earlier: A Guide to Service Design', provides a set of principles upon which wellbeing initiatives for men should be based. Get a copy at: <https://www.samaritans.org/about-samaritans/research-policy/middle-aged-men-suicide/engaging-men-earlier>

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## Adjusting to COVID-19 Survey

This research is being conducted through [Dublin City University's School of Psychology](#). They are, currently, recruiting participants, and males are especially needed! Participation involves completing a twenty minute survey once per month for three months. This study aims to capture the impact of the uncertainty surrounding the COVID-19 outbreak, and to identify useful coping skills and habits for managing wellbeing - as well as potential predictors for problematic mental health during a pandemic. To find out more, see: <http://bit.ly/Adj2COVID>

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## Web Links

### Men's Issues on the Web ...

[COVID-19 and the gender health paradox](#)

[Men's aggression is tied to social pressure, shows study](#)

[Mind your head: experts talk about looking after your mental health](#)

[COVID-19 potentially has negative impacts on male fertility](#)

[Gay men more likely to face stigma and avoidant prejudice from heterosexual peers](#)

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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](mailto:emalematters@mhfi.org)

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



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