

# E-Male Matters

## Spring 2023

The newsletter of the Men's Health Forum in Ireland

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## News

### The Big Countdown Begins

Research clearly shows that men in Ireland experience a disproportionate burden of ill-health and die too young. They: die younger than women; have higher death rates for almost all of the leading causes of death and at all ages; have poorer lifestyles which are responsible for a high proportion of chronic diseases; present later to health services which can lead to a large number of problems becoming untreatable ... However, this is not a lost cause. Much can be / is being done to improve this situation.

We're now only a few months away from [International Men's Health Week](#) (MHW), which begins on the Monday before Father's Day and end on Father's Day itself. This year, it will take place from Monday 12<sup>th</sup> - Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> June. This week is celebrated in many European countries, as well as in the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Canada (and a number of other places worldwide), and offers a unique and ideal opportunity for everyone to do their bit to improve the health of men and boys by: heightening awareness of preventable health problems; supporting men and boys to engage in healthier lifestyle choices / activities; and encouraging the early detection / treatment of health problems.

The MHW theme for the island of Ireland this year is **'The Picture of Health'** and the call to men (and those who support the health of men) will be **what does that look like to you?**

During MHW 2023, everyone is asked to set realistic and practical targets for men's health, and to recognise that where there's a will, there's a way. So, now's the time to start planning what you might do to mark this important occasion.

A range of resources will soon be made available. These include posters, postcards, social media content, graphics, a new Man Manual, signposting tools etc. Keep up-to-date with developments at: <https://mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2023.html>

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### **HSE Men's Health Podcast**

In this HSE '[Talking Health and Wellbeing](#)' podcast, Dr Noel Richardson from the [National Centre for Men's Health](#) discusses why focusing upon men's health is important, how masculinity influences men's help seeking behaviours, and some of the initiatives developed in recent years to improve men's health. Noel also reflects on his own Parkinson's diagnosis and what this has taught him about men's health. Listen in at:

<https://hsepodcasts.podbean.com/e/04-men-s-health>

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### **Farmers' Health and Wellbeing: A Guide to Staying Healthy while Farming**

Farmers in Ireland care deeply for their land, crops and animals. Their 'gut instinct' about the health of their animals, and the condition of their land, is what keeps their farm productive. However, many Irish farmers also overlook the most important element of good farming - their own health and wellbeing. A booklet, produced by the Farm Safety Partnership, seeks to offer farmers simple and practical tips to stay healthy and well. Have a look at:

[https://www.hsa.ie/eng/publications\\_and\\_forms/publications/agriculture\\_and\\_forestry/farmers-health-and-wellbeing.pdf](https://www.hsa.ie/eng/publications_and_forms/publications/agriculture_and_forestry/farmers-health-and-wellbeing.pdf)

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### **Is Parkrun for you?**

[Belfast Men's Health Group's](#) latest podcast features Matt Shields - who is the Country Manager for Parkrun on the island of Ireland. Matt talks about his life, his passion for running, and how Parkrun has grown well beyond his expectations. [Parkrun](#) is a free weekly gathering for both experienced runners and beginners, and this interview highlights that it is not only about being a top athlete, but also about keeping fit, making friends, building connections, having a routine, staying healthy, volunteering ... Listen in at:

<https://www.podbean.com/media/share/pb-h9uxu-13ae023>

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### **SunSmart Campaign**

Most people living in Ireland have fair skin - the type which burns easily and tans poorly - so are at high risk of UV damage and skin cancer. It is particularly important to protect skin during childhood and if you are an outdoor worker (who is likely to have more sun exposure than other groups). The aim of the SunSmart campaign is to increase awareness of the steps you can take to protect your skin from the sun and reduce your risk of skin cancer. Find out more at: <https://www.hse.ie/sunsmart>

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### **Act FAST**

Did you know that, on average, two million brain cells die every minute after a stroke? ... But did you also know that you can make a difference to the outcome of a stroke by acting FAST? F.A.S.T. is a simple test that can help you to recognise if someone has had a stroke: (i) **F**acial weakness - can the person smile / has their mouth or eye drooped? (ii) **A**rm weakness - can

the person raise both arms? (iii) **Speech problems** - can the person speak clearly and understand what you say? (iv) **Time to call for an ambulance** if you spot any one of these signs. Watch this video to find out more: <https://youtu.be/WckB15sJ9r4>

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### **'Green Ribbon' Campaign Impact Report 2022**

Each year, [See Change](#) coordinates the '[Green Ribbon](#)' campaign - which seeks to spread awareness about mental health difficulties to help end mental health stigma and discrimination. During the month-long campaign, See Change organises events, runs social media campaigns and supports workplaces, organisations and the general public to start having open and honest conversations about mental health. The impact report on work during 2022 is now available online at: <https://seechange.ie/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Green-Ribbon-Impact-Report-2022.pdf>

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## Events

### **Suicide Prevention: Connecting Research and Practice**

Are you a researcher, policy maker or practitioner working in the areas of mental health, self-harm or suicide prevention? ... If so, you might like to register for an event which will showcase findings from some innovative research projects supported by the HSE's [National Office for Suicide Prevention](#). This will take place in Dublin, on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2023, from 9.30am to 3.45pm. Find out more at: <https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/suicide-prevention-connecting-research-and-practice-tickets-569162709987>

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### **Poverty in Northern Ireland: Where are we now?**

Twenty-five years on from the Good Friday Agreement, what progress has been made to reduce Northern Ireland's poverty rate? ... This [ARK](#) event will focus on social and economic inequalities - exploring potential solutions with a panel of policy and research experts. It will be held on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2023, from 2.30pm - 4.00pm, in the Ulster University's Belfast Campus. Register for a place at: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/poverty-in-northern-ireland-where-are-we-now-tickets-601372018897>

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### **Men's Health World Congress 2023**

A Men's Health World Congress will take place from 11<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023 in Sarawak, Malaysia. The theme is 'United for Men's Health' - as there is a need for a comprehensive and holistic approach to promoting men's health, and this can only be done successfully through inter-sectorial and inter-disciplinary collaborations. The Congress will not only cover epidemiology, policies and clinical advances in men's health, but will also explore how gender identity and changing social and cultural norms shape men's behaviours and their health. Find out more at: <https://www.mhwc.my>

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## Training

### **MA in Advanced Facilitation Skills for Promoting Health and Wellbeing**

Applications are now being invited for the Masters in Advanced Facilitation Skills for Health and Wellbeing course in [South East Technological University](#). This programme offers participants a unique opportunity to finely tune their facilitation and personal skills through practical experience, group process and advanced personal development. It is an IUHPE accredited Health Promotion Course, and graduates will be recognised as 'Accredited Health Promotion Practitioners'. Find out more at: [www.setu.ie/se92h](http://www.setu.ie/se92h)

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## Research

### **Health Survey (NI): First Results 2021/22**

Health Survey Northern Ireland is a [Department of Health](#) research initiative that runs every year on a continuous basis. The survey covers a range of health topics that are important to the lives of people in Northern Ireland. It has been running since April 2010, with separate modules for different policy areas included in different financial years. In November 2022, the Department released '*Health Survey (NI): First Results 2021/22*'. Copies of the report, and the technical notes, can be found online at: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/health-survey-northern-ireland-first-results-202122>

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### **Suicidal Ideation in Men during COVID-19: An Examination of Protective Factors**

Men account for three-quarters of all suicide deaths in many Western countries. Whilst extensive research has examined risk factors for suicidal ideation and behaviour in men, protective factors remain under-explored - particularly social support, resilience and coping behaviours. Such factors are particularly important to examine in the context of COVID-19, when enforced isolation (among other negative lifestyle effects) created widespread risk for the development of suicidal ideation. This mixed-methods study aimed to examine the associations of various protective factors with suicidal ideation in men. Read about the findings at: <https://bmcp psychiatry.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12888-023-04539-9>

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### **Gendered Health Consequences of Unemployment**

Existing literature indicates that unemployment leads to deteriorated mental and somatic health, poorer self-assessed health, and higher mortality. However, it is not clear whether, and to what extent, the health consequences of unemployment differ between men and women. This study, in Sweden, found that: hospital admission is somewhat more common among unemployed males than among unemployed females; receiving sick pay is much more common post-unemployment for men than for women; and excess mortality is higher among unemployed males than among unemployed females. Read more about this research at: <https://bmcp public health.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-022-14899-8>

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## Temporal Trends in Sperm Count: A Systematic Review and Meta-Regression Analysis

The aim of this study was to examine trends in sperm count among men from all continents. The data generated suggest that a world-wide decline is continuing at an accelerated pace, and that research on the causes of this decline - and actions to prevent further disruption of male reproductive health - are urgently needed. Read about the findings at:

<https://academic.oup.com/humupd/article/29/2/157/6824414>

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## Survey on Alcohol and Label Information

The [World Health Organisation Regional Office for Europe](#) is seeking participants for research into perceptions of the health-related information on alcohol labels. Anyone, aged 18 or older who has consumed alcohol over the past year, is eligible to participate. The survey will take 5-10 minutes of your time and is completely anonymous. Take the survey at:

<https://extranet.who.int/dataformv3/index.php/112836>

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## Web Links

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

[Reframing masculinity: connecting men to mental health supports that work](#)

[What does it mean to be 'man enough?' \[video\]](#)

[Half of men with eating disorders don't get any help](#)

['Tackle Your Feelings' podcast - positive mental health with Irish rugby players](#)

[One in five men in NI diagnosed with prostate cancer too late to cure, says charity](#)

[Should we rethink how we approach men's healthcare?](#)

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## Next Edition

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

Anyone can submit an article for inclusion in this newsletter - so long as it is of relevance to males, does not promote a commercial enterprise / product, and does not insult anyone.

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