
Is 'Euro 2016 Fever' a Medical Condition? ...

- Michael O'Neill and Martin O'Neill Launch Men's Health Week 2016 in Ireland

This is a critical time for many men on the island of Ireland. There's a date that all men need to know about - as it could make a huge impact upon their health. This date is Monday 13th - Sunday 19th June 2016, also known as International Men's Health Week (or, to some, the first week of the long awaited Euro 2016 Championship). To help local men etch this date into their minds, National Soccer Squad Managers, Michael O'Neill and Martin O'Neill, are featuring in an island-wide poster campaign to launch Men's Health Week and raise awareness of men's health needs. This has certainly worked because, just like the matches in France, all the Men's Health Week resources are already sold out!

'Euro 2016 Fever' is in the air. Men across the country are planning their viewing schedules (possibly even their working hours), stockpiling enough refreshments to see them through a nuclear winter, and making arrangements with their friends for the common sharing of this unique experience - as soccer teams from both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland have qualified for the Championship.



Many men are knowledgeable about what lies ahead. They know which teams have got through to this stage; who is in each group; what days and times countries will be playing; what the bookies' odds are for each team to win; and which players are likely to be the stars of the competition.

Euro 2016 has created a common bond among many men. They have a reason to be in each other's company. They are well informed by the media about what lies ahead. They are prepared to give their opinions and stand out from the crowd. They are motivated and excited. They are passionate, enthusiastic and want to be involved. They are likely to show more emotion than usual ... They've obviously caught a bug. Maybe 'Euro 2016 Fever' is a medical condition after all.

Colin Fowler, Director of Operations for the Men's Health Forum in Ireland, comments:

"These are traits that we don't often associate with males on the island of Ireland, and we need to harness this energy. Like a common cold, Euro 2016 will come and go in a matter of weeks, but men's health issues will remain long into the future. Men on the

island of Ireland experience a disproportionate burden of ill-health and die too young, but this is not a lost cause. Men's Health Week seeks to do something positive and practical to challenge this situation".

So, why should we focus upon men's health? Well, the reasons are both stark and clear ...

- Men in Ireland die, on average, almost four and a half years younger than women do.
- Males have higher death rates than women for all of the leading causes of death and at all ages.
- Poor lifestyles are responsible for a high proportion of chronic diseases.
- Late presentation to health services leads to a large number of problems becoming untreatable ...

This high level of premature mortality amongst men in Ireland has far-reaching repercussions - far beyond the life satisfaction of men themselves. It affects not only industry and commerce, but also impacts upon the social and financial positions of families. However, just like in the Euro 2016 Championship, Men's Health Week this year calls upon men to unite and work together for change. Everyone on the island of Ireland is encouraged to ask themselves the question: *'are we winning?'* in relation to men's health. If the answer is *'no'*, then it's time to do something to remedy this situation.

To support Men's Health Week 2016, the Men's Health Forum in Ireland (www.mhfi.org) has produced a new, free, 32 page Man Manual. This booklet - titled 'Challenges and Choices' - opens with the statement: *'Warning ... Reading this manual can seriously improve your health'*, and goes on to issue a series of ten simple, practical challenges to local men:

1. Order a soft drink the next time you're in the pub.
2. Try some fruit or vegetables you've never tasted before or think you don't like.
3. Make at least one journey by foot or bicycle instead of going by car.
4. If you're under 25 and sexually active, get yourself checked for chlamydia.
5. Stressed out? ... Walk away from tense situations before you blow up.
6. Find out about the opening hours at your local GP's surgery.
7. Get your blood pressure checked within the next two weeks.
8. Get a mate to quit smoking with you - and get advice on how to stop.
9. Show a doctor that lump, strange-shaped mole, or rash that's bothering you.
10. If you get backache, don't let it become a pain in the ass. Get it sorted.

Each challenge is accompanied by a reason why it is important to take action, a menu of possible choices available, and where to find help. Most importantly, it provides this information in a straightforward, step-by-step, humorous and commonsense way.

Helping to launch Men's Health Week, Minister for Health, Michelle O'Neill, stated ...

“Evidence clearly shows that there are many challenges to be faced when seeking to improve men’s health. However, it also highlights that men’s health can be improved in many significant ways - if men make the right choices, and are given the support, encouragement and opportunities to succeed. This Man Manual provides the information and the tools, and Men’s Health Week offers men across Ireland the opportunity to make a positive change. I am delighted that the Public Health Agency was able to support the production of this much-requested booklet.”

[See attached photograph of Minister for Health, Michelle O’Neill, at the launch of Men’s Health Week with some members of the all-island Planning Group]

Colin Fowler adds:

“Over the next few weeks, men of all ages and backgrounds on the island of Ireland will be captivated by the exploits of some of the fittest athletes in the world. It’s ironic that, at the same time, some of these men may also be over-indulging in junk food, alcohol, smoking and sofa surfing. Michael O’Neill and Martin O’Neill know the importance of having a squad which is healthy in both mind and body. Men’s Health Week calls men to action, to unite with others to improve their health and, of course, to enjoy the Euro 2016 Championship!”

ENDS - followed by Editor’s Notes

Editor’s Notes:

Further information on Men’s Health Week 2016 can be obtained by contacting ...

Northern Ireland:

- Colin Fowler (**Belfast**) | Mobile: 0044 751 9945261 | Email: colin@mhfi.org
- Michael Lynch (**Derry / Londonderry**) | Tel: 0044 2871 377777 | Mobile: 0044 790 3619511 | Email: michael.lynch@man-ni.org
- Sandra Gordon (**Newry**) | Mobile: 0044 797 7501908 | Email: sandragordon@cancerfocusni.org

Republic of Ireland:

- Finian Murray (**Navan**) | Tel: 00353 46 9076449 | Mobile: 00353 87 2038790 | Email: finian.murray@hse.ie
- Lorcan Brennan (**Waterford**) | Tel: 00353 51 844260 | Mobile: 00353 86 3619884 | Email: lorcan@mens-network.net
- Men's Health Week always begins on the Monday before Father's Day and ends on Father's Day itself. This year, it will run from Monday 13th until Sunday 19th June. It is celebrated in most European countries, as well as in the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and a number of other places worldwide. It is coordinated on the island of Ireland by the Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI).
- The Men's Health Forum in Ireland (www.mhfi.org) is a charity which works on an all-island basis to enhance the health of men and boys. It is a voluntary network of individuals and organisations, men and women, which seeks to identify the key concerns relating to male health and to increase understanding of these issues.
- The core aims of Men's Health Week each year are to:
 - Heighten awareness of preventable health problems for males of all ages.
 - Support men and boys to engage in healthier lifestyle choices / activities.
 - Encourage the early detection and treatment of health difficulties in males.
- Each year, individual countries focus upon a specific theme. The theme for 2016 on the island of Ireland is: '*Men United for health and wellbeing*'. Everyone is asked to pose the question: '*are we winning?*' If not, then it's time to do something positive and practical to change this situation.
- Men's Health Week 2016 in Ireland has been planned by a broad range of partners who contributed to an inter-agency, all-island Planning Group.
- The celebration of Men's Health Week has been supported by the Public Health Agency in Northern Ireland, and the Health Service Executive's Health Promotion and Improvement Department and National Office for Suicide Prevention in the Republic of Ireland.
- Key information on Men's Health Week on the island of Ireland is available online ...
 - Full overview of Men's Health Week 2016: www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2016.html
 - Briefing paper which answers all the most common questions: www.mhfi.org/mhw2016toolbox.pdf
 - Men's Health Week posters and images: www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-image-pack.html
 - Practical suggestions for organisations on how they can get involved: www.mhfi.org/mhw2016celebrateit.pdf
 - Latest developments: www.facebook.com/MensHealthWeek and www.twitter.com/MensHealthIRL

- Michael O'Neill (Northern Ireland Team Manager) and Martin O'Neill (Republic of Ireland Team Manager) are acting as the 'face' of Men's Health Week 2016 in Ireland. They are starring in a nationwide poster and postcard campaign, and appear on the cover of the free, 32 page 'Challenges and Choices' Man Manual which is being given to men across the island of Ireland.
- The 'Challenges and Choices' Man Manual issues ten simple and practical challenges to men. After each challenge, there is a reason why it is important to think about this issue. It then offers three choices for action (Do Nothing, DIY, Find an Expert), and explains the consequences of each option.
- Production of the 'Challenges and Choices' manual was funded by the Public Health Agency in Northern Ireland, the Health Service Executive in the Republic of Ireland, and the Irish Pharmacy Union.
- A low resolution PDF preview copy of the 'Challenges and Choices' Man Manual can be accessed online at: www.mhfi.org/challenges2016.pdf
- The total number of resources distributed throughout the island of Ireland for Men's Health Week 2016 was ...
 - 47,000 'Challenges and Choices' Man Manuals
 - 7,000 posters
 - 12,000 postcards
- Minister for Health, Michelle O'Neill, met with some members of the Men's Health Week Planning Group at Castle Buildings, Stormont, to help to launch Men's Health Week. Download the photograph at: www.mhfi.org/MinisterONeill.jpg

