

The Status of Men's Physical Health: A Cause for Concern for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts



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What are men's health issues?



Mortality Should be Focus of Men's Health Issues

- Men die 5.4 years earlier than women
 - Black men die 7 years earlier than White men
- 43% greater age-adjusted death rate
- Die at higher rates than women from 14 of the 15 leading causes of death
- Under age 65, 75% who die from heart attacks are men
- 2 times death rate for heart disease and 1.5 times higher death rate for cancer
 - CDC and Amer Heart Assoc statistics



Why are men less healthy?

- 50% of morbidity and mortality are due to behavioral factors (*JAMA*)
- Men more likely to engage in over 30 health risk behaviors that increase the risk of disease, injury, and death (Courtenay, 2001).
- **Conclusion:** Men's earlier mortality and higher rates of illness due in part to less healthy lifestyles

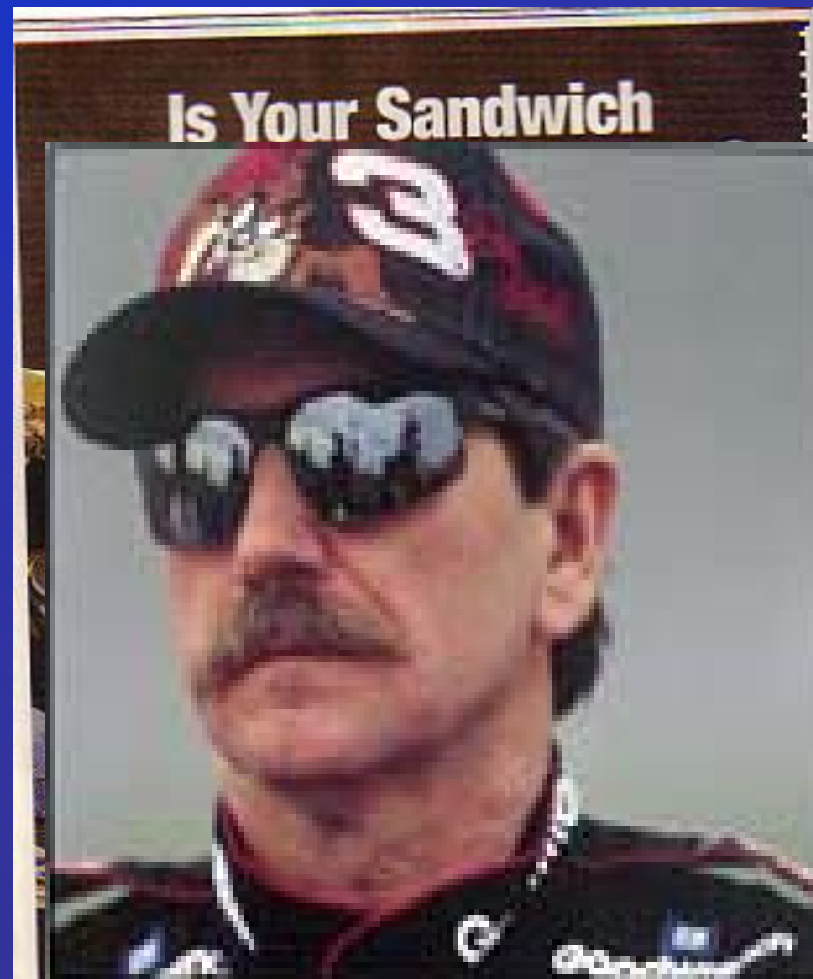


Why Should We Care?

- Costs of Diseases Connected to Health Behaviors
 - Diabetes II - direct and indirect costs to be \$174 Billion (American Diabetes Association, 2007)
 - Heart Disease - direct and indirect costs \$503 billion annually (American Heart Association, 2010)
- Improving men's health will save billions of dollars

Question: Why do men engage in health risk behaviors?

- Answer #1: Men may view health risk behaviors as masculine



Our Findings and Other Researchers

- More masculine men consistently report more health risk behaviors
 - Less healthy behaviors overall, less heart healthy behaviors, less sunscreen, going to physician appointments, obeying traffic rules, buckling seat belts, healthy diet, etc.
 - More physical fights, unsafe sex, drinking alcohol to relieve stress, not admitting to being sick

Implications

- ***Implication #1. Health promotion efforts for men need to address men***
 - Particularly since more traditionally masculine men will view general health promotion efforts as not relevant to them.
- ***Implication #2. Health promotion efforts should be framed in ways to help men be more effective as men***
 - Help them to be stronger
 - Be healthier so they can be more effective fathers and husbands
 - Be more productive and successful and work

Answer #2: Other men may influence men's health behaviors

- Social norms theory emphasizes that the perception of normative behavior influences behavior
- In ambiguous social contexts, perceptions of others provides information about effective action



Findings

- Most consistent findings accounting for most variance in our studies
 - Particularly male family members and male friends



Implications

- ***Implication 3. It is important that men see other men engaging in health promotion efforts.***
 - This could be in the media
 - in their family,
 - at the workplace,
 - or in other public arenas (e.g., sporting events).

Barriers and Health Behaviors

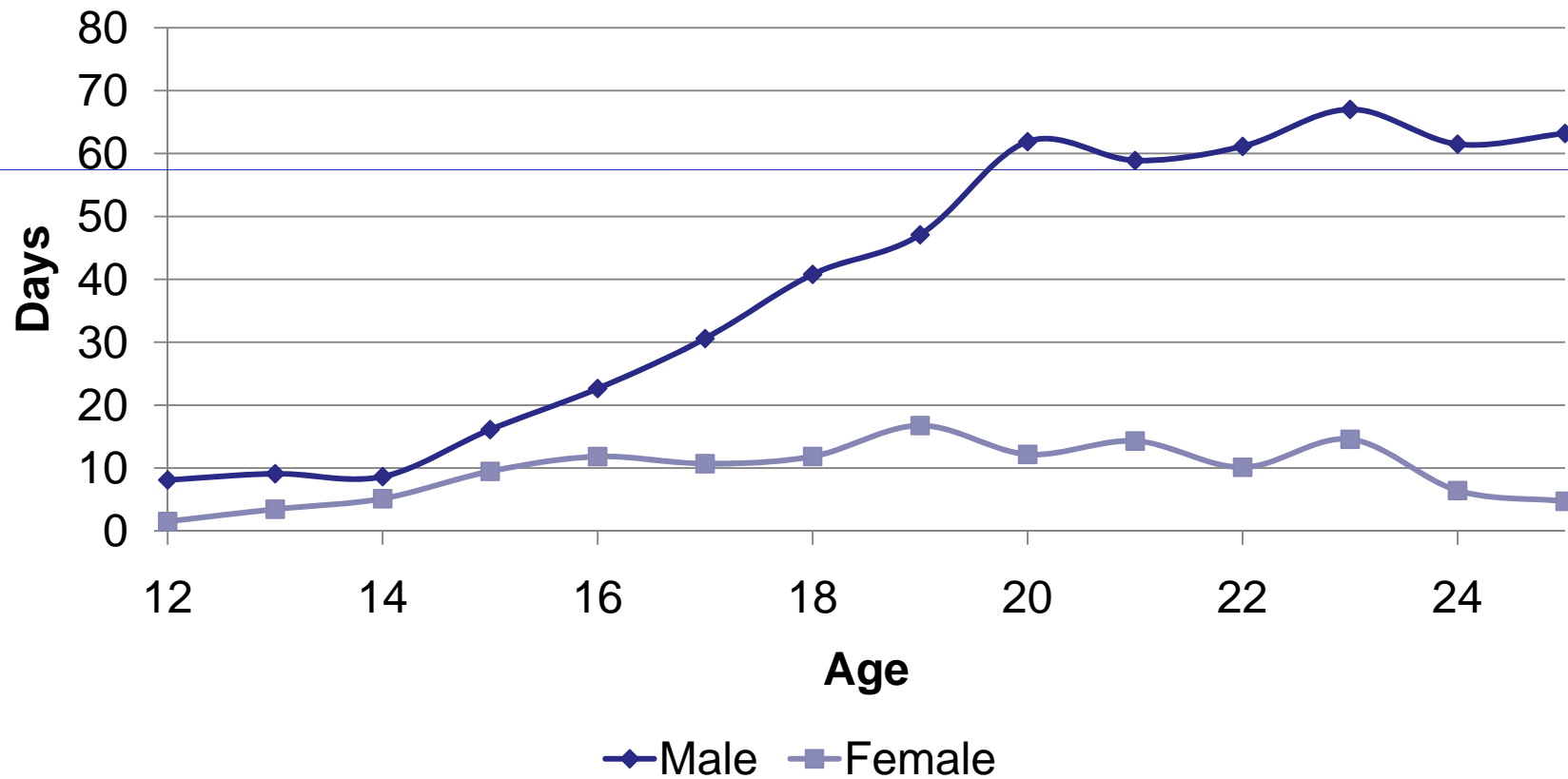
- Mahalik & Burns (2011)
 - Men reporting barriers to heart healthy behaviors more health risk behavior
 - Most masculine men were least likely to adopt heart healthy behaviors when there were barriers
- Men working in manual or industrial labor
 - Themes of not going to miss work for doctor
 - “they just kind of poke and prod me, and I don’t think it’s worth my time and effort to take a day off from work.”

Implications

- ***Implication 4. Bring health promotion efforts into workplaces and structure health promotion efforts to be available outside of the working day.***
 - Health screening at work, particularly ones where top-level male employees are participating, would help reduce barriers to health-promoting behaviors.
 - Moreover, healthcare providers should be given incentives for having office hours outside of the normal business hours.

Findings from Add Health Data

of Days Past Year Had 5+ Drinks



Implications

- ***Implication 5. Address health promotion efforts at adolescent males prior to points where they start to diverge so drastically from adolescent females.***
 - Prevention efforts in middle school and early high school.

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Cultural Backgrounds Can Inhibit Health-Promoting Behaviors

- Rivera-Ramos & Buki (2011)
 - “In the majority of Latino countries, the concept of the macho man and the idea of turning around and of someone inserting a finger, honestly, is something that one does not tell [others]...It’s almost the worst thing that could happen to you as a man.”



Implications

- ***Implication #6. Health promotion efforts must address cultural barriers such as misinformation or stigma.***
 - We need to especially target working-class and men with low levels of formal education and acculturation because they are more likely to espouse such maladaptive masculine notions.
 - Educational materials need to be multilingual, presented at low literacy levels, and include pictures to enhance the material's appeal.
 - As with health-promotion campaigns for the larger culture, educational materials should target perceptions about health and masculinity and reframe them in a way that makes health-promoting behaviors masculine