

# Male health in Australia: a call for action...

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*The Australian Men's Health  
Forum is the peak national  
forum promoting a social  
approach to male health  
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- Despite three decades of adverse statistics, male health policy or rather the lack of it, continues to fail the Australian male
- Research continues to demonstrate a disproportionate gender differential in death and illness for males in Australia
- The National Male Health Policy (NMHP) released in 2010 lacks endorsement, an action plan or adequate funding by the current Federal Government
- No Australian State or Territory Government has a specific, active male health policy
- Neither the Federal Government or any Australian State or Territory governments have administrative structures that cater specifically for the needs of men and boys. Conversely Offices for Women exist in every State and Territory and at the National level
- Males have a shorter life expectancy, higher rates of death from most non-gender specific causes across all age groups and a higher lifetime risk of many cancers and chronic conditions
- Standardised mortality rates indicate 23,000 excess male deaths per annum compared with women
- The leading causes of male deaths in Australia are ischaemic heart disease, cancers, respiratory system disease, prostate and lymph system disease, cerebrovascular disease, suicide and endocrine disorders, which together account for about 60% of male deaths
- Males account for 93% of all work-related fatalities
- Males account for three quarters of completed suicides nationally
- Those most at risk of premature death and illness include Indigenous males, males from rural and remote areas, those with blue collar backgrounds, males with mental illness, war veterans, gay, transgender and intersex people, males with disabilities, socially isolated and non-English speaking males
- Key risk factors include socioeconomic disadvantage, social isolation, smoking, high blood pressure, overweight and obesity, low levels of physical activity, high cholesterol, alcohol and substance abuse, poor diet, risky health behaviour and occupational exposure to hazards
- About half of males aged over 15 report health concerns, with the leading causes of years lost to disability being anxiety or depression, Type 2 diabetes, adult onset hearing loss, asthma and dementia
- Almost two thirds of males have big gaps in their health knowledge
- Mental illness over the life course affects just under half of the Australian male population; about 1 in 6 males reported experiencing a mental illness in the previous 12 months
- About one third of males report reproductive and other sexual health issues
- Sexually transmitted diseases are still common, particularly amongst Aboriginal males
- Males experience 70% of work related injuries
- Government research funding for male health is about one quarter of that allocated for women's health