



# What's up with the men folk?

## A call for successful initiatives in getting men to attend general practice

The average life expectancy of males in New Zealand is four years less than females – 78.2 years versus 82.2 years. Life expectancy for Māori males is 8.6 years less than other males in New Zealand. Men are more likely to have cardiovascular disease, high cholesterol and higher rates of many common cancers, yet anecdotal reports suggest that they are much less likely than women, to attend general practice and talk to a GP or practice nurse about their health.

In Part One of our men's health series, we outline some national programmes and campaigns that promote men's health. In Part Two, we hope to bring you some insight, solutions and success stories from your primary care colleagues.

### Men's health initiatives in New Zealand

#### One Heart Many Lives

One Heart Many Lives is a cardiovascular disease primary prevention programme, targeting Māori and Pacific men. It aims to raise both awareness of cardiovascular disease and its causes and decrease the level of cardiovascular risk among men. The main message is that the health of one person affects the lives of many others.

One Heart Many Lives is currently operating in Northland, Hawke's Bay, Whanganui, Taranaki and Lakes DHB. Each area adds unique characteristics to the national programme, making it their own.

[www.oneheartmanylives.co.nz](http://www.oneheartmanylives.co.nz)

#### Mana Tāne Ora o Aotearoa

Mana Tāne Ora o Aotearoa, the National Māori Men's Health Coalition, was formed to raise awareness of Māori men's health issues by profiling relevant health and social services targeting men's health.

Mana Tāne Ora o Aotearoa was established at the inaugural Māori men's health conference in 2009. The coalition is creating, developing and sharing innovative practices in Māori men's health, and expanding on successful models, programmes and services. It supports the sharing of successful practices and effective outcomes with the wider sector, providing a forum for information exchanges and facilitating research and best practice guidance.

[www.taneora.co.nz](http://www.taneora.co.nz)

#### Movember

Movember is an international campaign that aims to raise funds and awareness for men's health. In New Zealand, Movember supports the Cancer Society (prostate cancer) and Mental Health Foundation (Out of the Blue depression campaign).

Men from around New Zealand can join the campaign and seek sponsorship from family, friends and colleagues, while they grow a moustache during the month of November.

Since 2006, more than 50,000 people have participated and \$4 million has been raised in New Zealand.

<http://nz.movember.com/>

#### Men's Sheds

The Men's Sheds movement started in Australia to connect men with their communities and society, and is now growing throughout New Zealand.

Men's sheds offer a place for men to gather for friendship, to discuss health issues and to learn new skills. Men's sheds can help in addressing isolation, loneliness and depression.

[www.menzshedaotearoa.org.nz](http://www.menzshedaotearoa.org.nz)

## The Men's Health Challenge – Te Mātātaki Hauora Tāne

Men are more frequently diagnosed with cancer than women and also more likely to die from it. The Cancer Society of New Zealand has developed Te Mātātaki Hauora Tāne, a men's health challenge aimed at encouraging men, especially those aged over 50 years, to be more proactive about their health. Men are encouraged to complete a "scorecard" of health risk factors and make an appointment to see a health professional if they have identified two or more risks.

[www.cancernz.org.nz/information/mens-health](http://www.cancernz.org.nz/information/mens-health)

### Blue September

Blue September is a New Zealand campaign for the promotion of prostate cancer awareness. It encourages men to think about prostate cancer and to discuss it with their GP.

In New Zealand, around 2500 men are diagnosed with prostate cancer every year and 600 men die from it. Promoters of Blue September believe that this mortality rate can be halved by:

- Men taking responsibility for their health
- Men having regular health and prostate checks from at least age 40 years
- Early detection
- Early treatment

A Māori man's risk of dying of prostate cancer is double that of a non-Māori man. It is thought that an unwillingness to recognise the risks of prostate cancer and a reluctance to talk to their GP about it are significant factors in this disparity.

The Blue September campaign supports the Prostate Cancer Foundation of New Zealand.

[www.blueseptember.org.nz](http://www.blueseptember.org.nz)

[www.prostate.org.nz](http://www.prostate.org.nz)



### Men's Health Week

Men's Health Week is an international campaign that was recently held for the first time in New Zealand in June 2010. It aims to encourage men to improve their lifestyle, wellbeing and all areas of their physical, mental, emotional and sexual health. It promotes awareness of important male specific preventable health issues, daily exercise and a regular health checkup.

[www.menshealthweek.co.nz](http://www.menshealthweek.co.nz)

### We would like to hear from you!

- Do men attend your practice less than women?
- What do you think are some of the reasons why men do not attend general practice?
- What initiatives could your practice adopt to encourage men to attend general practice?
- Is it a good idea to promote "men's health checks" to encourage males of all ages to attend general practice?
- Do you have a "success story" that you would like to share with others?

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