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Give Men a Chance!

International Men's Health Week from June 9 – 15, 2003 focuses worldwide on male-related health issues – Men's health high on agenda of medical associations and bodies around the globe – International Society of Men's Health stresses importance of gender-specific medicine

(Vienna/ISMH May 23, 2003). Boys and men are, in comparison to girls and women, in an unlucky position healthwise, and - as must be said, it's more often than not their own fault. That men are genetically different from women has been proved as scientific fact in 2002. Their different genetic disposition may be one factor why men live on the average six years shorter than women. But let's face it, in most cases, at least in the "civilized world", men's largely not so manly behaviour and sometimes erratic lifestyle are responsible for their poor state of health.

Some Facts on Men's Health

The facts, which make health-professionals in all of Europe speak of a "crisis in men's health": Male life expectancy is unnecessarily low and too many men die too young from preventable causes. - Men die predominantly from illnesses like cardiovascular disease, prostate-, lung- and colon-cancer, diabetes, as well as diseases relating to liver and/or kidneys. And there is also a psychologic factor to be taken in mind: Men don't see doctors as often as they should and they don't like to talk about their health problems. They beat around the bush where their sex-life is concerned: topics like erectile dysfunction are still largely taboo, despite the fact that, correctly diagnosed and treated, the quality of life of the patients (and that of their partners) could drastically increase. Men hardly take advantage of preventive medicine and live a "more dangerous" life than women do. Men die six times as often as women in car accidents, and the suicide-rate is considerably higher among men than women. By changing only some bad lifestyle-habits, like avoiding stress, excessive drinking or smoking, men could increase their quality of life and their life-expectancy considerably, experts say.

Joining Forces – The International Men's Health Week

In order to draw worldwide attention to issues in men's health and to create awareness of specific needs in medical research, diagnosis and treatment of men, the International Society of Men's Health (ISMH) has been able to internationally synchronise the International Men's Health Week (IMHW) 2003 during last year's 2nd World Congress on Men's health (organized by ISMH). It will take place from June 9-15, 2003. - A further goal of the IMHW is to communicate to the general public the special health-risks men run but could combat quite easily, and ISMH also wants to stimulate self-responsibility in men for their own health.

The International Men's Health Week is co-promoted worldwide by a large number of organizations, like the European Men's Health Forum, the Men's Health Forum (England and Wales), the Men's Health Forum Scotland, the Australian Men's Health Information and Resource Center and the U.S.-based Men's Health Network. In many countries, and

on a local, regional or national basis, e.g. specifically tailored programmes for men with the focus on preventive medicine are offered free of charge by general practitioners, out-patient-departments of hospitals, and other health professionals. As Prof. Siegfried Meryn, President of the ISMH, put it: "I am delighted that men's health organizations in so many countries have decided to work together again on the International Men's Health Week. Together, we will highlight the appalling state of male health throughout the world and promote effective solutions. Men's health is a global problem that requires global solutions".

However, also national health services cannot be spared criticism. Meryn: "Health services have been very slow to respond to men's health needs and gender-medicine; little has been done so far to encourage and enable men to access services more quickly and effectively". By means of the IMHW, inter- and intranational institutions should therefore also be encouraged to develop health policies and services that meet men's specific needs.

3rd World Congress on Men's Health to take place in Vienna this coming October

Organized by the ISMH, the 3rd World Congress on Men's Health will take place from October 24 – 26, 2003, in Vienna, Austria, in close cooperation with prominent national (Austrian) and international partner-organizations, among them the World Organization of Family Physicians (WONCA Europe/WONCA World), the European Association of Urology (EAU), the Urological Association of Asia (UAA), the European School of Oncology (ESO), the World Psychiatric Association (WPA), the Men's Health Network USA (MHN) and the Pan African Urological Surgeons' Association (PAUSA).

The main topics of this congress focus on:

- Erectile Dysfunction and male sexual health
- Male cancer
- Male osteoporosis
- Hormone-Replacement-Therapy
- Male mood disorders
- Male cardiovascular disease
- Male lifestyle
- How to communicate with male patients.

For further and more detailed information, please refer to this congress's website: www.wcmh.info .

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The partner-organizations of the IMHW can be reached via their websites:

European Men's Health Forum: www.emhf.org
Men's Health Forum (England & Wales): www.menshealthforum.org.uk
Men's Health Forum Scotland: www.menshealthforum.org.uk
Men's Health Information and Resource Centre, Australia: www.menshealthnetwork.org
Men's Health Network (USA): www.menshealthnetwork.org