

MEN'S HEALTH MATTERS

**NATIONAL
MEN'S
HEALTH
WEEK**

**14-20
JUNE
2010**



NEWSLETTER 2010

National Men's Health Week 2010

Runs from June 14th to 20th



**NATIONAL
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HEALTH
WEEK**



Give men a reason to desire life and cut down on the high mortality rate (among other things, every 3 in 4 suicide deaths are men). Scotland cannot afford this tragedy, we can change it.

Make sure the all important phone call to the General Practitioner (GP) for a health check up is made this week and whenever any unusual changes are detected.

Check up

We know that testicular and prostate cancer affect younger men in their 20s as well as older men. These are not death sentences by any means. They can be successfully treated when reported.

It is hoped that Men's Health Week will serve as a prompt for men to self check – or see the GP, even if they find it embarrassing. There is professional help out there.

In relation to Bowel Cancer, if you are over 50 there is a need to pay attention to bowel activities to ensure there is no cause for concern (ie pain free bowel movements and no blood). Most of the problems that are discovered respond quickly to treatment if help is sought early. There is therefore no need to imagine the worst.

Better still, there is a simple test one can take in the privacy of their home. The kit is available from the website for Bowel Screening Programme.

Men's Health Week is a time when every man should consider his waist line. An expanding waist line is a warning to review what you eat and make some positive changes. However, even if you eat healthily, a visit to the GP is highly recommended.

Depression is not only a female experience, men get depressed and lonely too, it is amazing how a few minutes physical exercise can lighten up your mood. If after exercise a sense of hopelessness persists, please see a GP or call Breathing Space (a men's telephone counselling service which supports men feeling low or depressed).

For any further information please contact Men's Health Forum. We are here to serve.

Enjoy National Men's Health Week

Why is NMHW important?

- To raise awareness that good health does not just happen.
- To plant a seed in the minds of the younger generation so that healthy habits become second nature to them the way computers and mobile phones are.

Men matter

Men's Health Week is not only a matter for men but also for women raising boys. The influence of the family cannot be underestimated.

As the title of the poem goes "Children learn what they live." Most habits are learned from the home. For instance, if personal hygiene is instilled from childhood or visits to the dentist for a routine check up is part of a normal childhood repertoire the chances are it will become a habit in adulthood.

Men are special

Men's Health Week is the time for a clarion call to all men, boys and the women to whom they are precious to remind each other of how important they are in their lives.



The MHFS 10k for Men is an annual event that takes place on the last day of National Men's Health Week every year, which is also Father's Day.

This year's event will be held in Bellahouston Park, Glasgow, on June 20th and we expect to see record numbers of men taking part to take a positive move in improving their health and wellbeing.

Each year, men from all backgrounds, all ages (over 15) and all abilities take part together in this great fun event. Seasoned runners complete the course (through 2 of Glasgow's beautiful parks, Pollok and Bellahouston) in not much over 30 minutes, while the majority of men take around an hour, with quite a few walk/joggers finishing closer to two hours.

Each year, 40% of the guys taking part are doing their first ever 10k event, showing that this really is the event to start with! In addition to that, 40% of the guys are aged 40 and over, with our oldest to date being 83 years old!

The event aims to:

- Raise the profile of men's health in Scotland
- Engage with men of all ages and abilities in healthy activity
- Provides a major focus for National Men's Health Week
- Raise the profile of Men's Health Forum Scotland

For more information go to:
www.mhfs10kformen.org



MHFS Men's Jogging Network

To support the MHFS 10k for Men we have teamed up with jogscotland and have established a network of more than 30 men-only jogging groups supported by fully trained Jog Leaders.

These groups are free to men of all ages and abilities and encourage men not only to take part in the MHFS 10k for Men, but perhaps more importantly to keep up healthy activity all year round with the support of peers.

If you would be interested in leading a free, men only jogging group in your area or workplace we can train you for free – please get in touch via the 10k for Men website – www.mhfs10kformen.org

Self Management for Men Project

“A long term health condition is one of a prolonged duration, generally longer than a year that may affect any aspect of the person’s life. Symptoms may come and go. Usually there is no cure but there are often things that can be done to maintain and improve quality of life.”

Long Term Conditions Alliance (LTCAS) www.ltcas.org.uk

“Self Management is a concept where the person takes ownership and is central. It is a process of becoming empowered to manage life with long term conditions. It is not an individual action, a specific treatment or service; neither can it be delivered by a single organisation. Self management is the successful outcome of the person and all appropriate individuals to deal with the very real implications of living the rest of their with one or more long term condition.”

Gaun Yersel. The Self Management Strategy for Scotland. August 2008

Men’s Health Forum Scotland and the Self Management for Men Project

MHFS has recently secured funding from The Self Management Fund for Scotland administered by the Long Term Conditions Alliance (LTCAS) to develop a project that will help a range of agencies to support men in effective self management.

There are over 1 million men in Scotland living with one or more long term conditions. There are numerous organisations, both in the voluntary and statutory sector working with these men. The Self Management for Men Project will provide training, consultancy and support for these organisations to help them understand the specific needs of men in relation to self management, to better engage with men, and to provide appropriate services. We will also provide a range of web-based and written resources to support the ongoing development of their work.

This project will be delivered across Scotland.

Why gender is important

Gender and masculinity influence how men relate to their health. The belief that being a “real man” involves not talking about fears, concerns or not accessing support can often present barriers to effective self management. We know that in general men respond to illness and disability differently from women, and they may be less likely to access services. Therefore, gender and masculinity impact on how men effectively self manage long term conditions.

We know for example that between the ages of 15 and 64 men attend their GP practice almost half as often as women. We have to consider how to engage with men to better understand their needs and priorities. This will help in the delivery of services that can help men access the support that they need.

The Self Management for Men Project will share knowledge, skills and experience on what we know about engaging with men, the barriers men sometimes face, and ways that services can help to empower men in effective self management.

What will the benefits of the project be?

The overarching long-term benefit will be an increased capacity of all agencies in Scotland supporting self management to engage with men and respond to the specific needs of men, through improved awareness of the impact of masculinity and gender and self management.

The short to medium-term benefits for the agencies we will work with will be:

- an increased understanding amongst service providers, practitioners and carers of how men relate to and respond to long term conditions.
- an increased knowledge and understanding of how men access support for self management, and the barriers that men sometimes face.
- an increased understanding of men’s needs as people being cared for and carers.
- an increased capacity to engage effectively with men, and ensure services respond to identified needs.
- Improved access to services for men to support them in successful and positive self management.
- Increased capacity of service providers and practitioners to engage in a positive way with the broader equality and diversity agenda.

Through this programme of work we believe we can help bring about a better experience of self management for men in Scotland.

We would welcome, and look forward to, the opportunity of working with you. If you would like more information in the meantime, please contact the project team.

The Self Management for Men Project

T: 0141 550 7515

Email: cara@mhfs.org.uk



“It was such a shock to find out that I had cancer because I had no symptoms at all. I felt brand new.”

THE TEST TO SAVE YOUR LIFE

In Scotland, 3400 cases of bowel cancer are diagnosed every year, with 95% of cases occurring in people aged over 50 years old.

It is the second most common cause of cancer death in men, yet a number of men simply shy away from taking the life saving test that comes through their letterbox at home as part of the Scottish Bowel Screening Programme offered to all 50 – 74 year olds.

However, one Glasgow man tells us why he’s thankful he chose to act and lives to tell the tale.

57 year old father and grandfather William Tait did not throw away his bowel screening test like his friends did when it arrived.

He read the information and decided to complete and send off the simple home-based test.

Two weeks later he was contacted by his local Health Board after the testing centre found signs that something might be wrong and required further investigation.

Within a week, specialists had found a cancerous tumour on William’s colon and after a few more tests he underwent surgery to remove the tumour.

William says: “It was such a shock to find out that I had cancer because I had no symptoms at all. I felt brand new.”

“When the kit arrived I put it on the shelf first but decided to do the test because I lost both my Mum and Dad to cancer and I just wanted to be there for my daughter and two grandchildren.”

“It’s odd to think that you can have cancer and not have a clue that you’ve got it. I dread to think what would have happened had I not done the test as it would have taken some considerable time for me to get symptoms by which time it may have been too late.”

“I would really urge anyone to do the test. It took five minutes and it was the best thing I ever did and who knows I might live for another 30 years! It is not the end even if you do have cancer because if they catch it early they can do something about it.

“Everyone I’ve told about my story all plan to use the kit now so I’m really glad that something good has come from my experience.”

Professor Bob Steele, Director of the Scottish Bowel Screening Programme, met William at a recent event at the Scottish Parliament to highlight the screening and bowel cancer.

He says: “William was very lucky that we caught the disease early. He did not delay taking the test and this was so important. As William says, it can pick up disease often when someone has no obvious symptoms and they are completely unaware that anything is wrong. This is the life-saving opportunity provided by the screening.”

“Lots of information is provided with the test kit when it arrives and information can also be accessed whenever and wherever it is convenient at www.bowelscreening.scot.nhs.uk. This includes a short film which explains more about the test and how to complete this.”

“I would urge all those eligible to follow William’s example and take the test, it could just save your life.”

The problem with the prostate...

There are two main problems with the prostate.

One is a lack of awareness. In fact, the 3 'W's – what it is and does, where it is and what can go wrong with it!

The other main problem is getting men to take action when they have symptoms! Men are extremely reticent about recognising symptoms and making an appointment to see their GP about any problems with 'the waterworks', often preferring to put up with symptoms and trying to keep them hidden away. They may be worried about what the GP might say or anxious about some of the tests or examinations. A key challenge is to help change such views as the sooner any symptoms are picked up and dealt with the better the outcome is likely to be. So if you have any concerns on this front then make an appointment with your GP.

There are a few conditions that can affect the prostate so it's not always prostate cancer.

Prostatitis. This is inflammation of the prostate.

Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia. This is caused by the prostate growing or enlarging and so causing problems for men when passing urine or not being able to pass urine.

Prostate cancer. This is now the most common cancer in men.

How is the prostate checked?

There are a few tests and examinations the GP will probably do.



PSA (Prostate Specific Antigen) test.

This is a simple blood test to check the PSA level.

PSA is made only in the prostate. Some PSA leaks out of the prostate into the blood so it's normal to find PSA in a man's blood. This is called the PSA level.

As a man gets older or if the prostate is damaged or enlarged then more PSA can leak out into the blood so giving a higher PSA level.

A word of caution about the PSA test.

At the moment, the PSA test is the best test available to check for any diseases in the prostate. However, it is not perfect. There are benefits but there are also drawbacks in having this test. It is best used as a guide for the doctor to make a diagnosis on what might be going on.

For more information on the PSA test check out our website www.prostatescotland.org, or our PSA leaflets to help you decide whether or not to have the test. Talking this over with your GP can also help.

Digital Rectal Examination (called a DRE)

Because the prostate cannot be seen or checked from outside the body, one of the first tests the doctor will do is a DRE.

For this examination, the doctor puts a gloved finger into the back passage to feel the shape, size and condition of the prostate. This is a straight forward procedure to help the doctor decide what may be best for you.

But, it is an examination that worries some men. Although it may be embarrassing or a bit uncomfortable, the doctor has done this many times before and understands how you might be feeling.



WHITE RIBBON SCOTLAND

Men working to end violence against women

About the campaign

White Ribbon Scotland is a charitable body that campaigns to involve men in tackling violence against women. We are part of the international White Ribbon Campaign, which is the largest effort in the world of men working to end violence against women, with campaigns in over 55 countries.

Since recruiting our first coordinator Callum Hendry in November 2009, White Ribbon Scotland has gone from strength to strength. We have forged close relationships with supportive organisations and look forward to working together on a number of projects. We joined with hundreds of campaign supporters from across the country at the White Ribbon March in Stirling and took part in a series of events to mark International Women's Day. We look forward to meeting with new friends and colleagues to help the campaign grow as we work towards eradicating violence against women in Scotland.

GET INVOLVED

White Ribbon Scotland is looking for runners for the MHFS 10k for Men run!

We are looking for more people to be part of our White Ribbon Scotland team which will be running on Sunday 20th June during the Men's Health Forum Scotland 10k for Men event in Glasgow. If you think you can help and want to get involved either through running, assisting the team on the day, or even help with anything else, please get in touch.

Sign the White Ribbon Pledge

A core part of the campaign is to encourage men to take the White Ribbon Pledge "not to commit, condone or remain silent about violence against women". Hundreds of men in Scotland have already taken the pledge and you can join them by coming along to our stall at the 10k for men event or by taking the pledge online at www.whiteribbonscotland.org.uk – where you can also find a range of news and updates about the campaign, along with a range of information, resources and campaign ideas about how men can help tackle violence against women.

Thanks for your support

Email: info@whiteribbonscotland.org.uk

Telephone: 0131 313 7003

Website: www.whiteribbonscotland.org.uk



For more information or to take the self test then check out our website on www.prostatescotland.org.uk



Physical Activity and Health Alliance Scotland

The Physical Activity and Health Alliance is a network that engages a variety of people from different sectors and professions who are involved in the promotion of physical activity and health in Scotland. It is a joint collaboration facilitated by NHS Health Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Government, in order to support and connect the physical activity and health workforce of Scotland in the implementation of the Scottish Physical Activity Strategy 'Let's Make Scotland More Active' (Scottish Executive, 2003).

What does the Physical Activity and Health Alliance do?

Taking the form of a virtual e-network, the Alliance provides the workforce in the field of physical activity and health in Scotland with an interactive vehicle for two-way communication through which:

We connect people to information by keeping members up-to-date on physical activity and health issues, including evidence, policy and practice across a range of settings, sectors and professions involved in physical activity in Scotland.

We connect people with each other within and across a range of professions, sectors and settings. By bringing people together, we are able to share information and experiences. Through networking we are able to help you make the right connections in order to help you do your bit to make Scotland more active.

We connect people to policy providing the opportunity for members to inform policy development and implementation through consultation and debate.

The workforce includes all those with a role to play in the promotion of physical activity within national and local government, NHS health boards, community health partnerships, community planning, voluntary and community organisations, research and academia, media, local enterprise companies and businesses.

The Physical Activity and Health Alliance website can be accessed by anyone online at www.paha.org.uk



PAHA news and events

The Physical Activity and Health Alliance hosts an annual National Physical Activity Conference and the latest Annual Conference took place in February 2010 at Edinburgh Conference Centre. It was developed under the theme of 'Getting the Message Across' which inspired, motivated and brought alive some of the latest developments in the physical activity and health agenda in Scotland. This allowed participants to hear the final recommendations from the National Physical Activity Policy Review Group, gain a better understanding of recent UK Physical Activity Guidelines and network with like-minded people.

The conference also celebrated the launch of the first ever Physical Activity and Health Alliance Awards Scheme in recognition of outstanding efforts that reflect the implementation of the national strategy 'Let's Make Scotland More Active.'

In addition to the annual conference, PAHA hosts and supports Scotland's physical activity and health practitioners by hosting regular regional events and through representation at both UK and International events, including recent attendance at the 3rd International Congress on Physical Activity and Public Health in Toronto Canada. Information about these events and others can be found in the events section of the PAHA web pages.

PAHA also distributes a monthly e-newsletter to all members, with the view to disseminate National Physical Activity news, publications, events and jobs. You can sign up to receive the free e-newsletter via the PAHA website: www.paha.org.uk



Scotland's National Physical Activity Strategy and current physical activity guidelines

The National Physical Activity Strategy for Scotland Let's Make Scotland More Active (LMSMA) was published in 2003. The strategy is a 20 year plan and set 'targets to achieve 50% of all adults (aged over 16) and 80% of all children (aged 16 and under) to meet the minimum recommended levels of physical activity by 2022'. Current guidelines for physical activity indicate that:

- Adults should accumulate (build up) at least 30 minutes of moderate activity on most days of the week.
- Children should accumulate (build up) at least one hour of moderate activity on most days of the week.

A UK wide review of National Physical Activity Guidelines is currently being undertaken and the Physical Activity and Health Alliance is a great way to ensure that members keep informed about any forthcoming updates to the recommendations over the coming months.



Getting in touch and joining the alliance

The Alliance continues to evolve with and for its members. It has a growing membership, including:

- in excess of 3000 professionals across Scotland and beyond.
- people in a range of professional and volunteer backgrounds, including local government, NHS Boards and Community Health Care Partnerships, Community Planning, voluntary and community organisations.

Why not get involved and be part of this Scottish Physical Activity and Health Alliance? It's free to join, and open to a broad range of people, and organisations. Visit the PAHA website at www.paha.org.uk and don't forget to sign up as a member on the registration page.

We would be delighted to hear from you via the website, by emailing nhs.HealthScotland-PAHA@nhs.net or by phoning Ashleigh Oates, Health Improvement Programme Officer at NHS Health Scotland on 0141 354 2496.



Men in Childcare

Men in Childcare promote the training and recruitment of men for the Early Years Childcare workforce. This remains a challenging task but one which through our innovative approach has seen numbers sustained and the profile of the initiative rise year upon year.

The new addition of training bases in Glasgow and Aberdeen to Edinburgh and South Lanarkshire, means that we now have training available in the major areas of Scotland.



Raising awareness of the need for a more gender balanced workforce seems to be a growing by-product of our recruitment drives and helps employers take heed of their Gender Duty requirements.

Men in Childcare are through various correspondences, acknowledged by former students on how even the Introductory course had totally changed their approach to their own children and their development. We have also had men use the introductory element of the course to secure employment within the sector, using it as a stepping stone to further training within the workplace.

The fact that students are showing evidence of learning and could be working toward full qualification, can be enough to encourage employers to take them on and give them a chance, perhaps because of a concerted campaign on the project's behalf when we wrote to numerous nurseries throughout the country asking them to do just that.

Men in Childcare, are the only childcare training provider in Scotland, specifically aimed at attracting men into the childcare profession. They are continually acclaimed throughout Europe and across the globe as an example of success and good practice.

The care and education of pre-school and primary aged children continues to be one of the most gender-segregated occupations in the UK. Men in Childcare use an innovative approach to try and redress this balance and increase the number of men working in this profession. We also provide support to existing male staff and trainees.

The shortage of trained male childcare workers and pre-conceived ideas about men's suitability to work in this field can make it very difficult to attract male applicants. We have managed through positive publicity and positive media coverage to counter-act this view. This year positive publicity has been achieved both in the UK and overseas as a result of the work of Men in Childcare.

Due to the ongoing work of the project, a number of men now become aware of the training through word of mouth.

We continue to advocate the benefits to families, of men working in caring professions. As the number of men working in childcare increases, it follows that the children they are looking after will have an increased chance of experiencing positive images of men in caring roles.

Having men working in early years services encourages more men to use the services. **"The lack of male staff is widely recognised as a very significant factor for men not gaining access to services. Men are very clear that the services seem to them to be provided for women by women. Where there are male members of staff, men have engaged with them.**

If we wish an increase in the number of male carers, there will logically be a requirement for an increase in the number of males undertaking training. This increase becomes possible through Men in Childcare actively recruiting male students."



Our Links

www.meninchildcare.eu www.meninchildcare.com

MEN IN MIND

A Service for Black & Minority Ethnic Men Engaging, Listening, Learning, Supporting

What is 'Men in Mind'?

Men in Mind (MIM) is a Health in Mind service that provides information and support for black and minority ethnic men over the age of 16 years. Current funding is from local health and local authority.

The service (staffed by a service manager, assistant manager, support and development workers and sessional workers with a variety of community language skills) provides support services for black and minority ethnic men experiencing difficulties with their wellbeing and emotional health and also raises awareness of emotional health issues for black and minority ethnic men.

Men in Mind aims to apply a community development, recovery-focused and direct service approach to this work. Working throughout the City of Edinburgh, Midlothian and East Lothian, a range of services are offered including;

The Men in Mind Forum

A regular monthly forum, enabling service users and black and minority ethnic men interested in the work of the service to meet to discuss emotional health issues and make inputs into how MIM and other services can be best improved to meet their needs. The forum often involves inputs from other services and relevant agencies.

One to One Support

Delivered by Support and Development Workers and sessional support staff, emotional and practical support is offered in a confidential and non-stigmatising manner, particularly suited to men who may not wish to take part in group activities or do so after they have become more familiar with the service.

Open Drop-In Services

Men in Mind currently offers four drop-in services in different locations around the City of Edinburgh. These can provide opportunities for informal chats and disseminating information from other service providers, learning about local activities and events or being open physical activity groups. The Men in Mind drop-ins are always delivered in accessible and established community venues where a range of activities take place that might also be of interest to service users.

Group Support services

During the past few years Men in Mind has run a series of educational programmes and activities, including:

- Basic Computing Courses in collaboration with the local Adult Learning Link
- A course that combined literacy and numeracy skills development with introductory concepts of social enterprise
- Cycling groups
- Walking groups
- Activities that encouraged men to explore their local area by incorporating fishing and canal trips

The MiM Service has also had the opportunity share its learning and experience by contributing to reports such as 'Finding Strength from Within' and regularly taking part in local health and social care fora, alongside working with national agencies such as VOX, NHS Health Scotland and of course the Men's Health Forum Scotland.

Men in Mind remains something of a unique service in Scotland, encompassing a number of equalities issues (particularly concepts of wellbeing, mental health, ethnicity and gender) and providing and developing appropriate ways of engaging with black and minority ethnic men and meeting their support needs.



Akin Fatunmbi, Service Manager
Men in Mind, Health in Mind, May 2010

If you would like more information on any of Men in Mind's services then please contact:

Telephone: 0131 225 8508

Email: mim@health-in-mind.org.uk

Web: www.health-in-mind.org.uk

Health in Mind, Men in Mind,
40 Shandwick Place, Edinburgh EH2 4RT.

Survivor Scotland.org.uk

All of us, whether we realise it or not, will know someone who has been sexually abused as a child. Sexual abuse knows no boundaries of gender, class, race or religion, and is a major public health issue – for men as well as women.

SurvivorScotland, the National Strategy for Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse, exists to support and improve the lives of adult survivors. Even in the years since the Strategy was launched in 2005, it's become increasingly clear that many men as well as women have faced these traumatic experiences. Men of all ages have felt increasingly able to speak about it and seek support – but many still find it very difficult and shameful to do so.

There is no single 'sexual abuse syndrome'. People are affected by their abuse in very different ways and to different extents. Many survivors live successful and rewarding lives, but there are long-term effects and difficulties for some.

These can include mental and physical health problems, alcohol and drug misuse to cope with the trauma, homelessness, self-harm and suicidal feelings. Men abused in childhood often feel confusion about issues of masculinity, sexuality, gender identity and personal relationships. Some men find their unresolved anger about what has happened spills over against others, and harms relationships which mean a lot to them.

In Men's Health Week, we hope that if you or your family or friends have been affected by sexual abuse, you will look up the SurvivorScotland website and find support there.

At www.survivorscotland.org.uk you can find information on:

- National and local support agencies;
- Information and research about sexual abuse;
- Personal stories of survival and recovery;
- The progress of the National Strategy including project funding;
- The Time to be Heard pilot forum for people who spent time in Quarriers;

And many other issues.

Meanwhile, web-based copies of Sarah Nelson's Edinburgh University study, Care and Support Needs of Men who Survived Childhood Sexual Abuse (2009) are available at SurvivorScotland's website Research Section, or on Edinburgh University's CRFR website:

www.cfr.ac.uk/researchprojects/rp_malesurvivors.html.

A limited number of hard copies are now also available from Health in Mind, Edinburgh, who collaborated with Edinburgh University on this project.

See www.health-in-mind.co.uk, e mail contactus@health-in-mind.org.uk or telephone 0131 225 8508. Health in Mind are currently collaborating with Sarah on a booklet for staff working with abused boys and men, funded by Choose Life Edinburgh.

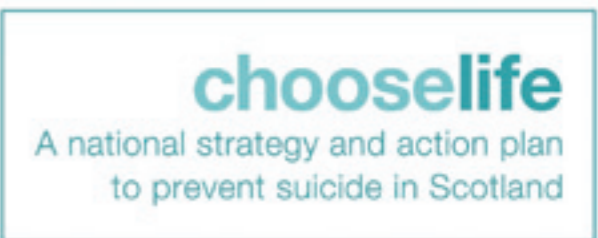
CHOOSE LIFE

Choose Life, Health Promotion staff and Partners in Argyll and Bute will be attending the Police 5-a-side Football Tournament in Dunoon on the 5th and 6th June. The tournament organised by Strathclyde Police, is an annual event in the town and draws teams from all over to compete. Teams are divided into age categories with under 16's to over 35's competing over the weekend.

Choose Life, the suicide prevention strategy, and Partners had stalls at last year's event and gave out information about many aspects of health including suicide, self harm, mental illness and recovery, sexual health, smoking, alcohol and drugs. Sam Souter the Senior Health Promotion Specialist for Mental Health said, "Young men are statistically more vulnerable to suicide and this event gave us the opportunity to engage with this group and speak to them about it". She continued, "The T-shirts which we gave out had information about the links between suicide, alcohol and mental health as well as contact numbers for support on the inside of them".

"As you can see from the photos they had funny tag lines on the front and they were very popular and provide us with a great way to get information across".

The staff attending last year engaged with over 100 people with 65 males completing a wellbeing questionnaire which provided information to the participants and also supplied us with valuable information about the knowledge and concerns of the local population. This year's event is taking place on the 5th and 6th June in Dunoon with Choose Life and partners attending again.



Men's Health Highland

Men's Health Highland (MHH) was originally established as a Consultative Group in 1989 by the Scottish Health Education Group as part of a national two year project in response to a perceived need for more attention to be paid to men's health issues. Following the end of the project the group then established itself as an independent body.

The aim of the group is to promote the good health, both physical and mental of men in the highland area and to work in partnership with those sharing this interest.

Men's Health Highland activities

MHH produced a leaflet in 1999 on Men's Health which was distributed to all 75,600 households in the Highland area.

In 2001 and 2008, MHH published the results of GP Surveys that were undertaken in the Highland and Argyll areas. The surveys looked at issues around provision of Men's Health services by GPs and Suicide and Mental Health.

"Men for Life"

In 2002, MHH published research by George Hobson called "Men for Life". You can access this via their website www.mens-health-highland.org.uk

OSTEOPOROSIS IN MEN

While Osteoporosis may be more common in women, it's disabling and debilitating consequences can be just as prominent in men. In fact, 1 in 5 men over the age of 50 will break a bone, mainly due to poor bone health.

Bob Rees knows only too well the difficulties men can face in getting appropriate diagnosis and treatment for a condition so strongly associated with women.

Bob was on a family holiday in the Dominican Republic in June 2002, when he collapsed in agony.

"I heard a loud bang – like a gun going off – and it felt as if I had been hit from behind with a sledgehammer," explains Bob. **"I collapsed and passed out with the pain and when I came round, I couldn't feel my legs. A doctor was called and I was given an injection of morphine, I was there for 2 hours and could not move without pain."**

Nobody talked to Bob about osteoporosis, even though rarer diseases were tested for.

Events and meetings

MHH have raised awareness through information stands, conferences and public talks/meetings on various topics that affect the health of men in the Highland area. Some of these are outlined below:

- Quarterly meetings in Assynt House, NHS Highland, during which, as well as business, there are usually 2 or 3 speakers on different issues related to Men's Health.
- Series of talks in prison.
- Conferences on "Suicide", "Fathering" and "The Health of Men on the Margins in Society" – these were attended by 80-90 delegates.
- In 2008 MHH held a one-off free public meeting on a few different aspects of men's health. In 2009, a series of 7 free public meetings took place with up to 80-90 delegates in attendance and these are continuing through 2010.
- Information stands in different public places such as Eastgate Shopping Centre, The Highland Games, Colleges, Community Centres and Football Grounds. Posters and leaflets are put on display and men are offered a mini health check which consists of taking their height, weight and blood pressure. If an abnormal result was found they would be referred to their GP. Well over a 100 people have been checked in some of these sessions.

If you would like further information on the activities of Men's Health Highland, please contact Trevor Escott via email tescott@btinternet.com

Men's Health Highland is a registered charity SC022499

"After a week in hospital, I arrived back in the UK. Various tests were carried out over the next 3 months, but no one ever mentioned osteoporosis. Everyone kept talking about Multiple Myeloma, or bone cancer. Eventually I went to a private spinal surgeon, who recommended a six hour operation on my spine."

In March 2003, nine months later and after extensive tests, Bob was diagnosed with severe osteoporosis. While he was relieved that he didn't have bone cancer, he was shocked to discover that he had the bones of an 80 year old.

Bob turned to the National Osteoporosis Society for support and is now an ambassador for the charity. He finds that talking to other people with osteoporosis helps him deal with his own pain, and he advises anyone who has recently been diagnosed with osteoporosis to try and keep active. He says: **"Don't sit back and give in. Small lifestyle changes such as walking can help to keep bones healthy."**

For more information on osteoporosis visit www.nos.org.uk or call the helpline on 0845 450 0230

THE GREAT GENDER AND HEALTH DIVIDE

We know something about health inequalities between rich and poor, but what about the gender divide? Three years after the introduction of the duty on public bodies to promote equality of opportunity and eliminate discrimination, are men and women equal in health?

That was the focus of a national event hosted by NHS Health Scotland's Equalities and Planning Directorate on 23rd February 2010, which encouraged the NHS in Scotland to look at health topics from a gender perspective.

Among the speakers was Equalities and Planning Director Cath Denholm, who highlighted the distinctively Scottish nature of the gender divide. In terms of cultural issues **"Masculine ways of dealing with emotions in Scotland are generally not good for mental health, and many of the harmful coping strategies that we see because of that lead to a slower uptake of health services by men generally,"** she said.

"Equally, the emotional culture of Scotland is not particularly good for women's health either," she added, referring to higher instances of particular types of mental illness, such as stress and anxiety, related to the pressure of maintaining societal roles.

Other speakers included Dr Sarah Payne of the University of Bristol, who spoke about making services more appropriate and accessible for both men and women, so both can achieve a better life and better life expectancy.

Higher risk

Alan White, Professor of Men's Health at Leeds Metropolitan University, argued that he would like to see more campaigns speaking directly to men about their health. He pointed out that men are more at risk of developing and dying of cancers that should affect men and women equally.

The event was supplemented by a variety of parallel sessions focusing on service delivery and workforce topics, including gender based violence, mental health and transgender issues.

The audience included NHS equality and diversity leads and teams, planners, managers, policymakers and health practitioners, as well as representatives from local government, equality organisations and the voluntary/community sectors.

A conference report will be available very soon, please check the website for more information. www.healthscotland.com/equalities

or contact Jo Bartlett for a copy of the report
e: joanne.bartlett@nhs.net Tel; 0141 3542923



STILL NOT EQUAL

Some of the statistics quoted at the conference point up the gender divide:

- 25% of men die between the ages of 15 and 64 – just 14% of women die between those ages
- In 2008, the suicide rate for males was over three times that for females.
- More men than women in Scotland are overweight (42.5% and 34.3%)
- Transgender people experience high levels of discrimination, with a direct impact on mental health
- Women are more likely than men to make a quit attempt with an NHS smoking cessation service

'GAYCON 2010 – GAY MEN'S SEXUAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING'

**20 – 21 October 2010,
Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh**

Scotland's third national expert conference on gay men's sexual health takes place in October with opening addresses by the Minister for Public Health and academics of international fame.

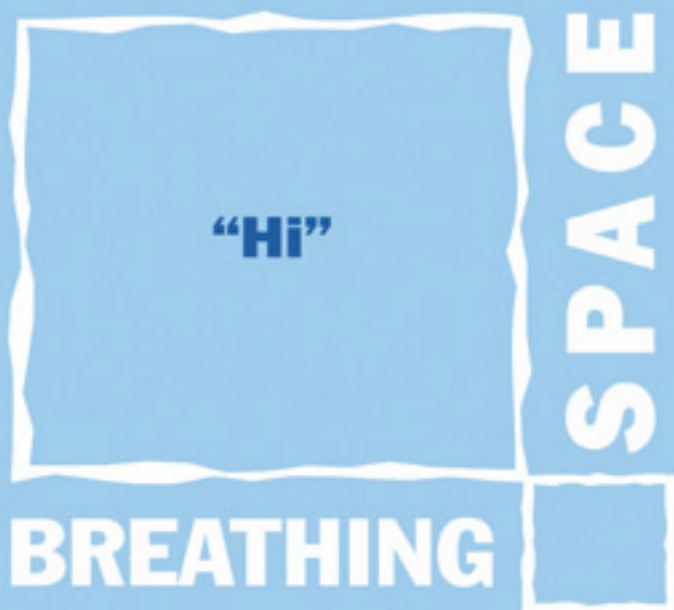
A national conference for anyone working in the area of gay and bisexual men's sexual health. The conference will include workshops, seminars, presentations and plenary sessions and is organised by a steering group made up from HIV and health agencies across Scotland.

Building on the success of 'Gaycon08' this free two day conference aims to present the best available research and public health evidence in the field of gay men's sexual health and wellbeing; demonstrate best practice from around Scotland and further afield; explore future partnerships. A key aim of the conference is to ensure that the implementation of national sexual health policy, including the HIV Action Plan, NHS QIS HIV and sexual health standards, meets the specific sexual health needs of gay and bisexual men at a time when rates of HIV in this community continue to rise.

As well as inviting delegates to register early for this important conference, the organisers are calling for interested individuals and organisations to contact them to submit abstracts and presentations.

Visit www.gaycon.org for more information.

GAYCON 2010



You've just done the hardest part

It's not easy for men to pick up the phone and talk about problems or emotions. We're not ones to open up. Instead we bottle things up. That's why there's Breathing Space. They try and make it easier for us to talk about what we're going through. Call in strict confidence on **0800 83 85 87** or visit us at www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk

**Open up when you're
feeling down**