



MEN'S HEALTH

Raising Awareness and Promoting Preventive Care

June is Men's Health Month, a global initiative dedicated to raising awareness about the unique health challenges men face and emphasising the importance of preventive care. Despite medical advancements, men continue to experience higher rates of life-threatening conditions and lower life expectancy compared to women. By recognising these disparities and encouraging proactive health habits, we can help improve the overall wellbeing of men, families, and communities.

UNDERSTANDING MEN'S HEALTH DISPARITIES

Men across the globe face a range of serious health challenges. They are statistically more likely to suffer from chronic illnesses such as heart disease, diabetes, and certain cancers. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), these disparities are driven by factors like:

- Higher rates of tobacco and alcohol consumption
- Unhealthy dietary habits
- Less frequent engagement with healthcare services

Men, on average, live about five years less than women, due to a combination of biological, behavioural, and social influences:

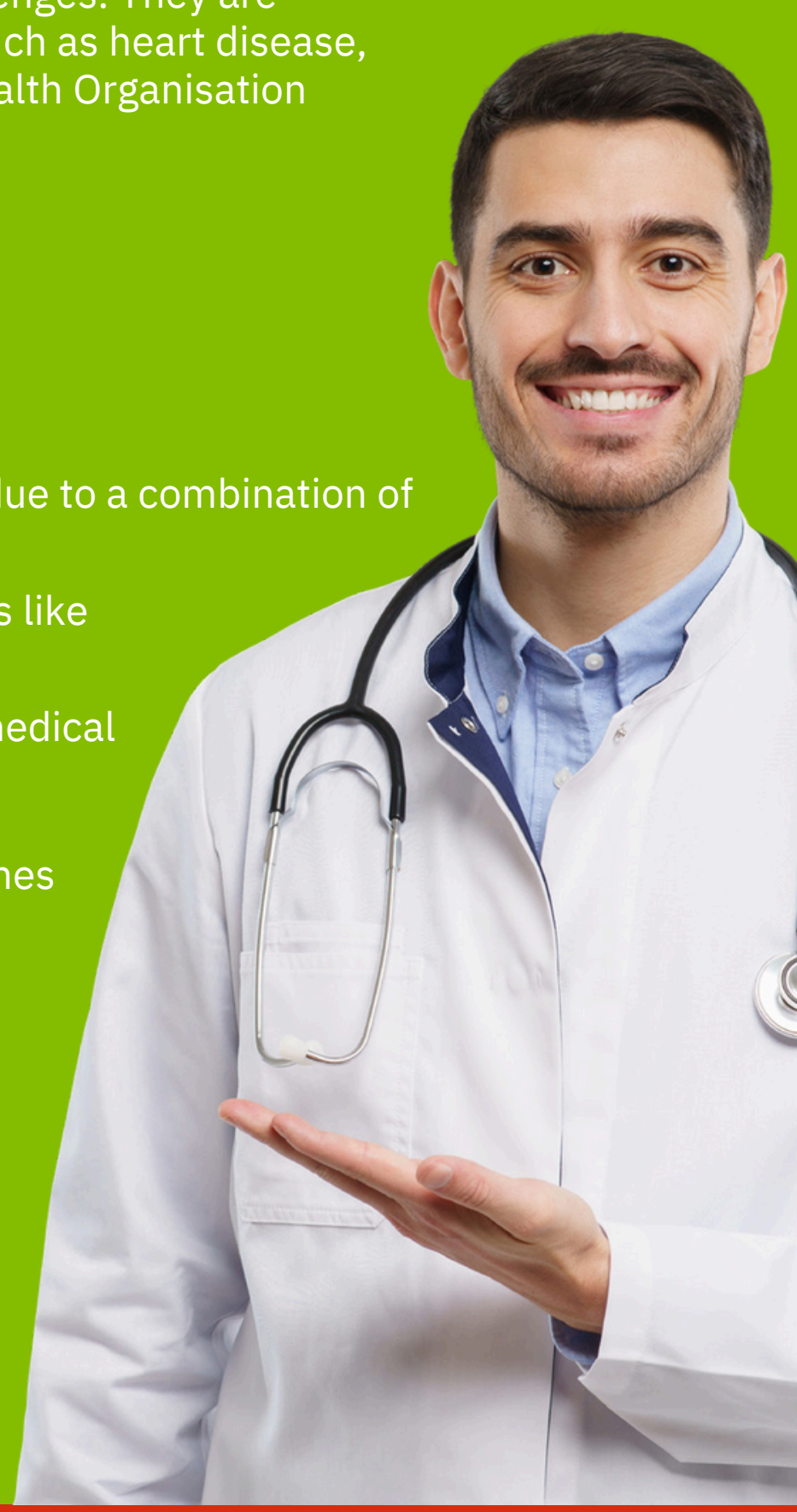
- Biologically, women benefit from protective hormones like estrogen and some genetic advantages.
- Behaviourally, men are more likely to delay seeking medical care, often waiting until symptoms become severe.

Mental health adds another critical layer. Men are four times more likely than women to die by suicide, yet they are significantly less likely to seek mental health support.

The Importance of Regular Health Check-Ups

Preventive care is vital in detecting health issues early, when they are most treatable. Routine health screenings can uncover silent conditions such as:

- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Prostate cancer



Annual wellness visits also allow for discussions around mental well-being, lifestyle changes, and necessary vaccinations. Building a relationship with your healthcare provider ensures personalised, ongoing support.

MEN'S HEALTH IN SOUTH AFRICA

The challenges are even more pronounced in South Africa, where men face a high burden of preventable diseases. According to the Western Cape Government, the leading causes of death in South African men include:

- Ischemic heart disease
- Diabetes mellitus
- HIV/AIDS
- Cerebrovascular disease (stroke)

Despite these sobering facts, many men over 40 do not attend annual check-ups, as recommended.

Cultural stigma, lack of time, fear, and limited access to healthcare, especially in rural areas—continue to be major barriers.

Barriers to Healthcare Access

Why are men less likely to go for check-ups? Here are some key reasons:

- **Cultural Norms:** Social expectations often pressure men to "be tough," discouraging emotional expression and help-seeking.
- **Fear of Diagnosis:** Many men fear learning something is wrong, so they avoid doctors altogether.
- **Time Constraints:** Long work hours and family obligations often leave little time for health appointments.
- **Limited Access:** In rural and underserved areas, healthcare facilities may be far or poorly resourced.

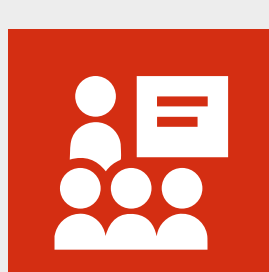
REAL STRENGTH MEANS REACHING OUT

Men, it's time to shift the narrative. **Seeking help is not a sign of weakness—it's a powerful act of courage.** Whether you're struggling physically or mentally, staying silent only makes it harder. Reaching out for a check-up, support, or a conversation is how you take back control of your health. It's how you show up for your partner, your children, your colleagues and most importantly, yourself. When you choose to speak up, to make that appointment, or to share what you're feeling, you are breaking a generational cycle of silence. You're setting an example for others to do the same. If you're struggling, please don't go it alone. Help is there. Strength begins with asking.



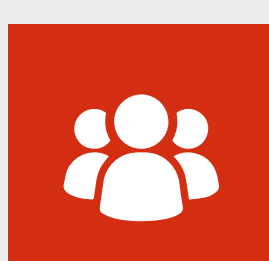
ENCOURAGING PROACTIVE HEALTH MEASURES

Overcoming these barriers requires intentional action at all levels. Here's how we can support better health for men:



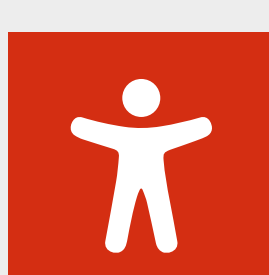
Education and Awareness

Campaigns can dispel myths and promote the benefits of regular check-ups.



Community Engagement

Local leaders and influencers can help change the narrative around masculinity and health.



Accessible Healthcare

Investments in healthcare infrastructure are essential to reaching underserved men.



Workplace Wellness

Employers can offer on-site screenings and encourage time off for health-related appointments.

Men's Health Month is more than just a calendar date, it's a call to action. It's a reminder that early detection saves lives, and that proactive care is not just smart, it's essential. Let's make it normal for men to go for check-ups, to talk about their emotions, and to prioritise their well-being. When men take care of themselves, everyone benefits: families thrive, workplaces grow stronger, and communities become healthier.



For more information, support and advice feel free to reach out to us on transneteap@mhg.co.za

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