

Australian Medical Association Limited
ABN 37 008 426 793

42 Macquarie Street, Barton ACT 2600: PO Box 6090, Kingston ACT 2604
 Telephone: (02) 6270 5400 Facsimile (02) 6270 5499
 Website : <http://www.ama.com.au/>



**NATIONAL MEN’S HEALTH STRATEGY NEEDED TO ADDRESS
 DISPARITIES IN HEALTH OUTCOMES**
AMA Position Statement on Men’s Health 2018

The AMA has called for a major overhaul of men’s health policy, saying a new National Men’s Health Strategy is needed to address the different expectations, experiences, and situations facing Australian men.

Releasing the *AMA Position Statement on Men’s Health 2018*, AMA President, Dr Michael Gannon, said the Government’s National Male Health Policy has been in place for almost a decade, yet men still face barriers to accessing health care.

“Australian men enjoy relatively good health outcomes, but they still have a shorter life expectancy than Australian women, and have a higher mortality rate for most major causes of premature death,” Dr Gannon said.

“Men are known to have greater vulnerability to various health disorders across their lifespan, they are more likely than women to experience serious health problems, and they have higher rates of substance abuse, suicide, and mental health problems.

“These barriers are caused, in the main, because Australian men are less likely to seek treatment from a general practitioner or other health professional, and are less likely to have in place the supports and social connections needed when they experience physical and mental health problems.

“Male suicide in Australia has reached tragically high levels, and men are more likely to engage in risk-taking behaviour.

“A National Men’s Health Strategy, appropriately funded and implemented, is needed to deliver a cohesive platform for the improvement of male health service access and men’s health outcomes.

“This does not mean taking funding away from existing women’s and children’s health strategies. Initiatives that address the health needs of one gender should not occur at the expense of the other.

“But we need initiatives to address the reasons why men are reluctant to engage with GPs, and the consequences of that reluctance, and invest in innovative models of care that overcome these barriers.

“Some men may be more comfortable seeing a male GP for issues which may be sensitive, such as problems affecting the urogenital system. Men should be encouraged to develop an ongoing relationship with a regular GP.

“Traditional notions of masculinity can affect the ways in which mental illnesses manifest in men, and their ability to seek help. Men with mental health problems are more prone to self-medication using alcohol and other drugs.

“Men and women should be given equal opportunity to realise their potential for a healthy life.

“It is time to revisit the National Male Health Policy with a cohesive National Men’s Health Strategy to respond to the complex and unique access needs of men.”

The AMA *Position Statement on Men’s Health 2018* is at <https://ama.com.au/position-statement/mens-health-2018>

Background

- Australian men have an average life expectancy approximately four years less than women.
- Australian men are more than twice as likely to die in a motor vehicle accident than Australian women.
- Men have a lower five-year survival rate for all cancers than women.
- Australian men experience approximately 75 per cent of the burden of drug-related harm.
- More than three in four suicide deaths in Australia are men, and intentional self-harm is the leading cause of death in men under 54 years of age.
- Men are more likely to be in full-time work and may have less time for medical appointments.
- Men are traditionally employed in high-risk jobs, especially in the trades, transport, construction, and mining industries.
- Australian men are twice as likely as Australian women to exceed the lifetime risk guidelines for alcohol consumption, with one in four men drinking at a rate that puts them at risk of alcohol-related disease.

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CONTACT: John Flannery 02 6270 5477 / 0419 494 761
 Maria Hawthorne 02 6270 5478 / 0427 209 753

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