

ORGANISATION FACTFILE

Men's Health Forum

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Received 2 November 2011
Accepted 3 November 2011

Who are you?

Men's Health Forum (MHF) is the only British national organisation looking at a wide range of issues affecting men and boys. Though our office is in London, our 11 staff members work across the whole of England and Wales, mainly co-operating on particular projects with disease-specific and profession-specific organisations.

How did you start?

In 1994, nurses recognised the poor state of men's health and came together to form a special interest group within the Royal

College of Nursing. Then, other professionals such as doctors (including current President, Dr Ian Banks) and health journalists (including current Chief Executive Officer, Peter Baker) became interested in the nursing group's work. We became a separate association then an independent charity in 2001. A nurse turned academic, Professor Alan White of Leeds Metropolitan University, remains Chair of the organisation.

What is the MHF's mission?

Our original founders saw that men's health was poor and that people with

a range of interests needed to band together to help identify the underlying causes and tackle the problems. We continue to work towards that goal in partnership with other organisations, and with nurses, general practitioners, health journalists, pharmacists, politicians, researchers and community workers.

What services do you offer?

We work on a wide range of issues, but are possibly best known for our work on sexual health, male cancers, mental health and improving men's access to health services.

Strategically, we work to develop policy and practice, and offer consultancy on reaching men with health information and on designing services for men. On the front line, we run the award-winning health information website, www.malehealth.co.uk, and we produce health booklets for men, available in bulk to health providers and employers. We also run National Men's Health Week each June, and have just brought to Britain an Australian 'men and cancer' awareness campaign called 'Blue September'.

In addition, we comment to the press about a full range of issues on which we work; in the past 12 months this has included sexual health, mental health, cancer and online health information. Journalists can find our press contacts and recent news releases at <http://www.menshealthforum.org.uk/press>.

What has been your biggest triumph over the years?

There are many achievements we are proud of. Our work on policy and practice means that men's health issues are reflected in national health policies and strategies much more often than they were a few years ago. In particular, our work has influenced the introduction of a screening programme for abdominal aortic aneurysms, and a men's strategy for the National Chlamydia Screening Programme.

What is your biggest worry?

These are challenging times financially for many organisations. The changes to the National Health Service (NHS) will mean a period of adjustment while new teams are formed, plans made and budgets allocated; we worry that work to tackle men's poor health will suffer.

Despite successes at a national level, action on the ground is still limited. Plus, there are still problems around meeting men's health needs, designing gender-sensitive services and implementing the requirements of the public sector equality duty.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Who:	Men's Health Forum
Where:	32 Loman Street, London SE1 0EH, UK
Contact:	+44 (0) 20 7922 7908 (general enquiries)
Online contact form:	http://www.menshealthforum.org.uk/content/contact-form
Website:	www.menshealthforum.com

What are your most exciting plans and biggest hopes for the future?

As to plans, next year's National Men's Health Week will look at heart disease, covering a full range of linked issues from the importance of physical activity to the way erectile dysfunction can reflect heart disease.

As to hopes, there have recently been some wonderful examples of work on men's health by local authorities. So we hope that the changes to public health responsibilities as a result of NHS reorganisation will provide incentives for more such authorities to talk to us about men's health in their area.

What do you want to say to Journal readers?

We want to say: "You can do so much for the cause of men's health! Don't just look at who is using your services but at those who aren't. Are men seeking advice and treatment in line with expected prevalence rates, and if not, why not?"

How can Journal readers and their patients contact you?

Information on our policy and practice work can be found on the MHF website (see Further Information) or use our online contact form to find the appropriate member of staff to deal with your enquiry. Patients can access www.malehealth.co.uk for fast, free, independent health information.

Competing interests None.

Provenance and peer review Commissioned; internally peer reviewed.

Editor's note This article is one in a series of occasional articles on key health organisations worldwide. The Journal would be pleased to hear from other organisations, particularly those based outside the UK, which would like to be similarly profiled.