

Clinical Considerations of COVID-19 on Behavioral Health of American Men

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About This Monograph

Men's Health Network (MHN) is a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide health awareness advocacy to men, boys, and their families where they live, work, play, and pray. PCORI provides grants and other funding to support programs that help people make informed health care by producing and promoting high-integrity, evidence-based research guided by patients, caregivers, and the broader health care community.

Program

This report is based on discussion by an expert panel convened by MHN on November 6, 2020, and partially funded by the Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI). Participants in this e-conference came from the public and private sectors and included federal, local, and community policymakers; men's health activists; academic researchers; grassroots entities; and providers who work with boys and men in a clinical setting.

Background

Much of this discussion builds on the understanding of the unique behavioral health issues faced by males and has been covered in depth by MHN in the core publication, "Behavioral Health Aspects of Depression and Anxiety in the American Male: Identifying Areas of Patient-Centered Outcome-Oriented Needs, Practices, and Future Research,"¹ and "Determining the Efficacy and Scope of Behavioral Health, Gender-Specific Screening Tools for Males Benefitting Front Line Community Workers."²

Panel Discussion Summary

The conference was structured to discuss a broad range of issues surrounding the clinical impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on overall ability to deliver health care to boys and men in America and how these clinical challenges have impacted their overall behavioral health and psychological wellbeing

The panel discussions touched on 12 main topic areas. These are:

1. Impact of Pandemics on Clinical Care and How the COVID-19 Pandemic Is Different
2. The Significance of Psychosocial Dynamic Changes Required By Infection Mitigation Strategies
3. How Mitigation Strategies Have Blunted Community Responses to Support Neighbors and Networks
4. How COVID-19 Has Increased The Awareness of Systemic US Health Care And Public Health Inadequacies and Systemic Racism
5. The Importance Of Activating Gender and Segmented Communications and Trusted Messengers

6. Male Gender as a COVID-19 Risk Factor and Its Unique Impact On The Clinical Care and Mental Health of Boys and Men
7. Pandemic Impact on Healthcare Workers And Their Clinical Training
8. Impact on Clinical Care Due To Fear And Mitigation Driven Health Service Curtailments
9. How COVID-29 Challenges to Conducting Clinical Trials and Basic Research
10. The Current and Future Roles of Technologic Tools Such As Telemedicine And Virtual-Support Networks
11. How COVID-19 Has Exacerbated Substance Abuse Concerns In Boys and Men
12. COVID-19 Driven Increases In Male Suicide Across All Populations

Recommendations To Move Forward And Areas Of Outcomes Oriented Research: A National Action Plan

The expert panel provided 20 recommendations for next stapes to take to: better deal with the current pandemic and its immediate aftermath, better prepare and guide decision making for any widespread future medical emergencies and; research issues that should be considered for funding to help enlighten policy and practices. These are:

1. More decisively address the broad range of drivers of male morbidity and mortality.
2. More decisively address health disparities, lifestyles and structural issues that have come to light due to COVID-19, particularly in minority communities.
3. Encourage and support adoption of newer technologies such as telehealth and remote data monitoring.to deliver health care.
4. Assess the impact of these newer healthcare delivery technologies and approaches in general

¹ <https://www.menshealthnetwork.org/library/depression-anxiety-males-report-summary.pdf> and

² <https://www.menshealthnetwork.org/library/community-summary.pdf>

- and particularly on their impact on rural and underserved communities.
5. Review reimbursement models to ensure that there is reimbursement parity for newer technologies to deliver health care services.
 6. Create more coordinated national, regional, and local structures and systems for distribution of necessary services and supplies through various public and private distribution channels during broad medical emergencies and pandemics.
 7. Conduct comparative evaluations of distribution practices for critical services and supplies to end-users to determine optimal efficiencies during broad medical emergencies and pandemics.
 8. Encourage the use of state-of-the-art impactful market-segmented health messaging approaches that take advantage of techniques used in most other consumer market segments.
 9. Evaluation of population segmented health messaging, trusted messengers and communications platforms to help guide outreach to people needs to be conducted across population bases.
 10. Adopt a universal standard to require scientific study data regarding all biomedical research and surveys include sex stratification, at a minimum, and optimally gender and racial stratification. This data format should be a standard requirement of all peer-reviewed journals and government data reports and should be a key required metric by biomedical research funders.
 11. Conduct a 360-review of public health departments, resources, including funding, technology and manpower to ensure they eliminate gender disparities and are better able to respond to future widespread medical emergencies.
 12. Adopt a symptomatology and diagnostic criteria as well as CPT and DSM codes for COVID-Related Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (CRPTSD).
 13. Adapt and expand techniques that have been successful in recognizing, mitigating, and treating Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) to CRPTSD.
 14. Establish and fund an Office of Men's Health in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and analogous entities at the state and local levels to create a focal point for male health.
 15. Engage in additional research to better understand the direct and indirect impacts of pandemics on behavioral health issues and neuropsychiatric conditions in men.
 16. Conduct studies to better elucidate the physiological impacts of potential pandemic capable pathogens on males.
 17. Evaluate the utility of so-called Virtual Visits and other alternative approaches to in-person visits as a substitute for live-in-person home visits or group meetings for medical peer-to-peer support groups, and social service in-home visits.
 18. Conduct workforce demographic analysis of health care professions and develop recruitment and financial support systems to address the need for additional minority men in all health care professions.
 19. Develop professional educational and post-graduate education standards for core curriculum and core competencies in comprehensive men's health care. Incorporate such standards into professional licensure and specialty board certification assessments.
 20. Engage in thorough assessment of the impact of school closings, virtual learning, loss of social and safety networks offered within the educational systems must be conducted to better manage educational practices and their impact on the comprehensive psychological wellbeing of school age and college students.

**[FULL TEXT OF THIS REPORT CAN BE ACCESSED ELECTRONICALLY AT
www.menshealthnetwork.org/library/behavioral-health-boys-men-covid-19-clinical.pdf](http://www.menshealthnetwork.org/library/behavioral-health-boys-men-covid-19-clinical.pdf)**

About Men's Health Network (MHN)

MHN is an international non-profit organization whose mission is to reach men, boys, and their families where they live, work, play, and pray with health awareness messages and tools, screening programs, educational materials, advocacy opportunities, and patient navigation. MHN is the sponsor of Men's Health Month (June) and Wear Blue Day. MHN maintains the TesticularCancerAwarenessMonth.com and ProstateCancerAwarenessMonth.com websites. For information on MHN's programs and activities, visit them at menshealthnetwork.org, on Twitter ([@MensHlthNetwork](https://twitter.com/MensHlthNetwork)), and on Facebook (facebook.com/menshealthnetwork), or call 212-543-6461.

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