

Men's Health, Fatherhood and the Impact on Society



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A Rather Interesting Story

- 🌐 **Pilansburg, South Africa: A group of adult females, their young and juveniles were brought to live in a community, but adult males were left behind due to very high transportation expenses.**
- 🌐 **The juvenile males soon went on a killing spree.**
- 🌐 **The adult males were brought in and the killing stopped immediately. They were strong enough to control the juveniles and set a better example.**

<https://www.kotafoundation.org/the-delinquents-in-pilanesberg>

- 🌐 This community was a herd of elephants in a national park. The endangered white rhino was being attacked, and 10% of their population died.
- 🌐 In Western society, fathers have often been dismissed as unimportant, frequently using animal models as justification.
- 🌐 Here we see that even among animals, when there is a well developed social order, the exclusion of male adults can have untoward consequences for social functioning and stability.

Frederick Douglass: “It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.”

- 🌐 A study in the state of Washington found that children born out-of-wedlock were:
- 🌐 1.7 times more likely to become an offender and 2.1 times more likely to become a chronic offender if male.
- 🌐 1.8 times more likely to become an offender and 2.8 times more likely to become a chronic offender if female.
- 🌐 10 times more likely to become a chronic juvenile offender if male and born to an unmarried teen mother.
- 🌐 Source: Conseur, Amy et al. "Maternal and Perinatal Risk Factors for Later Delinquency." *Pediatrics* 99 (1997): 785-790.


Sociological Effects of Fathers: Educational Attainment

- **Fatherless children are twice as likely to drop out of school.**
 - Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. National Center for Health Statistics. Survey on Child Health. Washington, DC; GPO, 1993.
- **Children in single parent families are more likely to be in trouble with the law than their peers who grow up with two parents.**
 - Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. National Center for Health Statistics. National Health Interview Survey. Hyattsville, MD, 1988.


Fatherlessness Deeply Affects Human Development Also


- 🌐 Children in father-absent homes are five times more likely to be poor.
- 🌐 2002: 7.8% of children in married-couple families were living in poverty.
- 🌐 This compares to 38.4% of children in female-householder families.
 - 🌐 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Children's Living Arrangements and Characteristics: March 2002, P20-547, Table C8. Washington, D.C.: GPO 2003.

Adverse Sociological Consequences of Fatherlessness

 The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services states, "Fatherless children are at a dramatically greater risk of drug and alcohol abuse."

 Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. National Center for Health Statistics. Survey on Child Health. Washington, DC, 1993.

 Children growing up in single-parent households are at a significantly increased risk for drug abuse as teenagers.

 Source: Denton, Rhonda E. and Charlene M. Kampfe. "The relationship Between Family Variables and Adolescent Substance Abuse: A literature Review." *Adolescence* 114 (1994): 475-495.

Adverse Sociological Consequences of Fatherlessness




- 🌐 - A study on nearly 6,000 children found that children from single parent homes had more physical and mental health problems than children who lived with two married parents. Additionally, boys in single parent homes were found to have more illnesses than girls in single parent homes.
 - 🌐 Source: Hong, Gong-Soog and Shelly L. White-Means. "Do Working Mothers Have Healthy Children?" *Journal of Family and Economic Issues* 14 (Summer 1993): 163-186.
- 🌐 - Children in single-parent families are two to three times as likely as children in two-parent families to have emotional and behavioral problems.
 - 🌐 Source: Stanton, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. National Center for Health Statistics. "National Health Interview Survey." Hyattsville, MD, 1988.

Does the “Maternal and Child Health” model take care of children’s health completely?

- 🌐 **Maternal health is often presumed to be the only important factor in children’s health and well-being. Maternal health has been a major public health focus.**
- 🌐 **Generally, the health of fathers has been dismissed as of little or no importance to the health of children.**
- 🌐 **However, new evidence strongly suggests that the health status and life experiences of the male parent may affect not only the health of his children, but of his descendants for generations to come.**

Dad's hidden influence: a father's legacy to a child's health may start before conception and last generations

[Science News](#), [March 29, 2008](#) by [Tina Hesman Saey](#)

-  **Teenage dads have children with an increased risk of prematurity, low birth weight, death at birth or death shortly afterward – study in Human Reproduction**
-  **Babies of firefighters, painters, woodworkers, janitors, and men exposed to solvents and other chemicals in the workplace are more likely to be miscarried, stillborn, or to develop cancer later in life.**
-  **Offspring of fathers who smoke or are exposed at work to chemicals called polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons are at increased risk of brain tumors.**

Dad's hidden influence: a father's legacy to a child's health may start before conception and last generations

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- 🌐 **Men younger than 20 and older than 30 make more abnormal sperm than men in their 20s. These damaged sperm could create an unhealthy embryo or pass on damage that could cause birth defects or future illness.**
- 🌐 **Children of older fathers are at higher risk of mutations that cause dwarfism or a premature aging disease called Progeria syndrome, as well as greater risk of autism, schizophrenia, and Down syndrome. There was also more frequent breast cancer in daughters.**

Progeria



Dwarfism (Achondroplasia)



Autism



Dad's hidden influence: a father's legacy to a child's health may start before conception and last generations




[Science News](#), [March 29, 2008](#) by [Tina Hesman Saey](#)

- 🌐 **Wen and his colleagues examined birth records for more than 2.6 million babies born between 1995 and 2000 to married, first-time, 20-something mothers in the United States.**
- 🌐 **Babies of teenage fathers, but not middle-aged men, had an elevated risk of still birth, low birth weight, and other birth problems.**

Studies showing The father's effects were ignored. The idea that male exposure could affect children was considered preposterous.

- **Forty years ago, Gladys Friedler exposed female rats to morphine before pregnancy to study whether they could pass on tolerance to narcotics to offspring.**
- **Pups of exposed mothers were born much smaller than average, but the pups later also went on to give birth to tiny babies, even though never exposed to the drug.**
- **When Friedler also gave male rats morphine before they bred, "To my total disbelief and bewilderment, paternal exposure also affected progeny."**

Epigenetic Changes: What Are They And How Do They Occur?

-  Recently, scientists have discovered that the way genes are packaged and regulated can be changed without actual mutation through chemical changes in DNA and proteins.
-  Anne Ferguson-Smith, a developmental geneticist at Cambridge University states "There's a chromosomal memory."
-  Epigenetic modifications act as a tape recorder, keeping a record of events in parents' lives and then handing them down to the next generation and beyond.

Learning disabilities from male parent drug exposure

- 🌐 **Neurotoxicology and Teratology (2006):**
- 🌐 **Male mice were exposed to cocaine through inhalation. When mated with non-exposed females, their pups that had trouble learning and remembering where to find food in simple mazes. The learning and memory problems were especially severe for female offspring.**
- 🌐 **No obvious DNA damage was found in cocaine-exposed males' sperm, but altered levels were found of two enzymes affecting DNA in sperm-producing tissue in the paternal mice.**

Paternal Age and Risk of Schizophrenia in Adult Offspring.

- 🌐 *Brown, Alan S. M.D.; Schaefer, Catherine A. Ph.D.; Wyatt, Richard J. M.D. et al. (2002)*
- 🌐 There was a marginally significant, monotonic association between advancing paternal age and risk of adult schizophrenia and schizophrenia spectrum disorders, after the analysis controlled for maternal age and other potential confounders.
- 🌐 **Conclusion:** Advanced paternal age at the time of birth of the offspring may be a risk factor for adult schizophrenia.

Paternal Military Experience and Risk of Leukemia in Offspring

- 🌐 *Wen, wan-Qing; Shu, Xiao-Ou et al (2000)*
Division of Pediatric Epidemiology University of Minnesota, Minneapolis
- 🌐 Offspring of veterans who served in Vietnam or Cambodia had a statistically significant increase in Acute Myelogenous Leukemia (AML).
- 🌐 Overall Odds Ratio 1.7 (95% CI 1.0, 2.9).
- 🌐 Odds Ratio for children diagnosed before the age of two 4.6 (95% CI 1.3, 16.1).
- 🌐 Military service was not associated with an increased risk of Acute Lymphocytic Leukemia.

Direct Exposure of Spouse and Children to Disease Agents

- 🌐 HIV / AIDS: 1:160 African-American Women in the U.S. is HIV positive, and a significant proportion of these cases is from heterosexual transmission. (CDC states that 1:50 African-American men in the U.S. is HIV positive.)
- 🌐 Other Sexually Transmitted Infections (HPV, HSV, chlamydia, syphilis, GC, etc)
- 🌐 Diseases spread by other routes (e.g., T.B.)
- 🌐 Smoking (habits and secondhand smoke)
- 🌐 Alcohol (Al-Anon), Substance Use (Nar-Anon)

Dad's Hidden Influence: Epigenetic Inheritance

- 🌐 **The recent discovery of epigenetics shows that the importance of fathers in human reproduction has been underestimated.**
- 🌐 **Assessing the health of fathers is vital in building effective efforts to prevent:**
 - 🌐 birth defects,
 - 🌐 learning disorders in children and,
 - 🌐 a wide spectrum of diseases later in life,
- 🌐 **It is likely that the male parent shares experiences with descendants for generations to come through epigenetic changes in DNA.**

Father's Mental Health and the Mental Health of Children

- 🌐 *Ramchandani PG, Psychogiou L. Paternal Psychiatric Disorders and Children's Psychosocial Development, The Lancet Online, 5 May 2009*
- 🌐 Compared to mothers, father's mental health problems tend to be more associated with behavioral problems in children than emotional problems.
- 🌐 Conclusions: "Most psychiatric disorders that affect fathers are associated with an increased risk of behavioral and emotional difficulties in their children, similar in magnitude to that due to maternal psychiatric disorders."

The Importance of Father Love: History and Contemporary Evidence

- 🌐 Rohner and Veneziano. *Review of General Psychology*. December 2001:
- 🌐 Examined nearly 100 studies published between 1949 and 2001 on the effect of parenting on children's behavior.
- 🌐 "The evidence seems clear that mothers are more effective parents when fathers are both supportive partners and nurturing parents."
- 🌐 "Widespread recognition of fathers' influence may help motivate many men to become more involved in nurturing child care."

Out of Touch: American Men and the Healthcare System

(Sandman et al 2000)

- Fewer than one out of five adult men said that they would see a doctor promptly even if they were feeling ill or in pain.
- One out of four males said that even if they were in pain or sick, they would delay seeking health care as long as possible.
- One out of six males stated that even if they were in pain or sick, they would delay going to a doctor for a week or more.

Health Care Utilization, Male vs. Female and Age

Table I
No regular physician by age

Source: Commonwealth Fund (2000)

Age	Men	Women
All	33%	19%
18-29	53%	33%
30-44	38%	22%
45-64	24%	13%
65+	10%	6%

Health Care Utilization, Male vs. Female and Age

Table II
No MD visit/past year by age
(Source: Commonwealth Fund (2000))

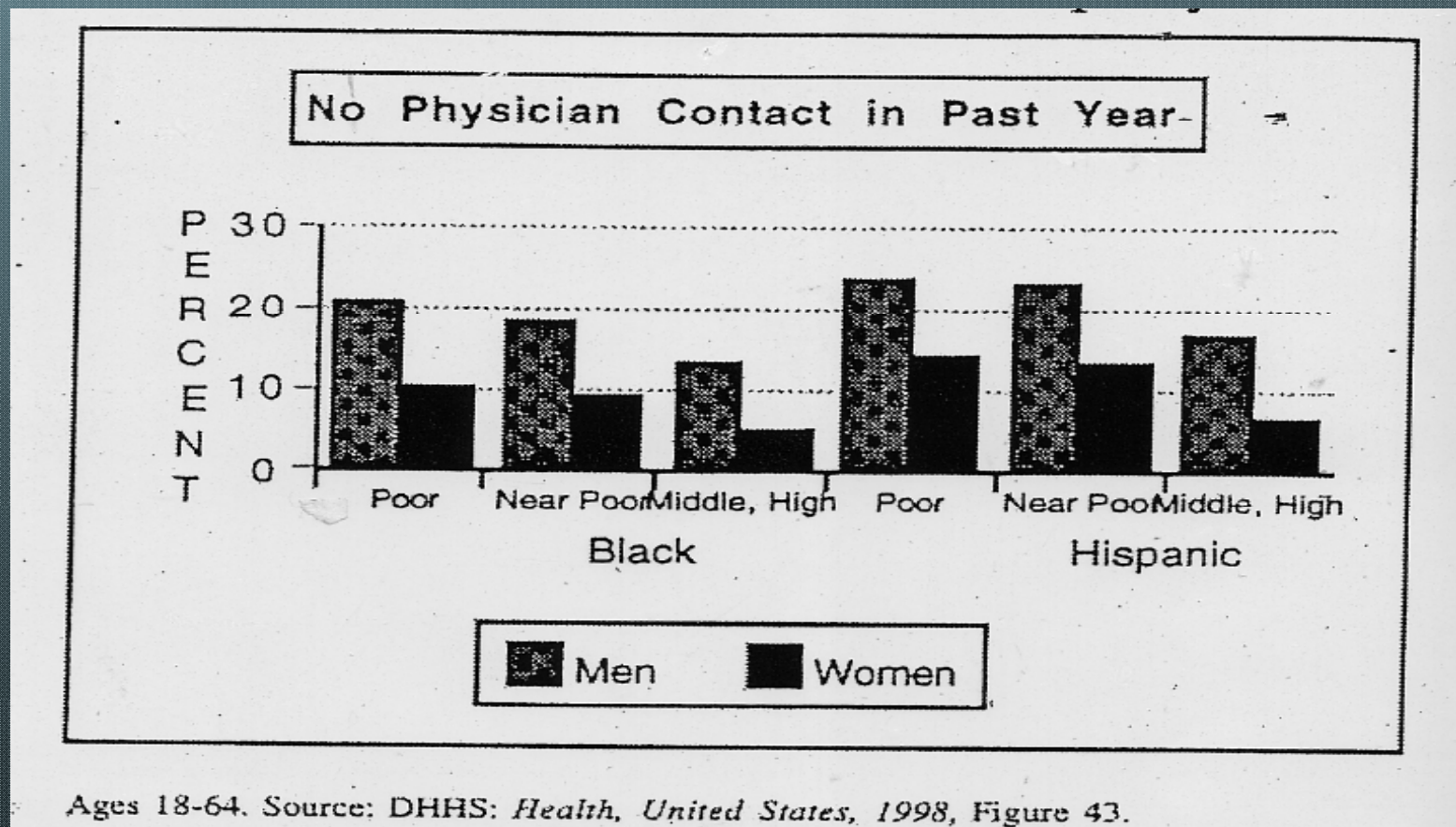
Age	Men	Women
All	24%	8%
18-29	33%	7%
30-44	30%	10%
45-64	18%	7%
65+	5%	7%

Why Are Younger Men so Disconnected From The Healthcare System?

- 🌐 A group of women professors at Morehouse School of Medicine heard me presenting on this topic and they observed that as girls they were serviced by pediatricians, but as soon as they got old enough to be considered women they were handed off to the obstetrician / gynecologist.
- 🌐 No similar handoff occurs for males after the pediatric age group. Instead, healthcare drops off.
- 🌐 In the 18-29 year age group issues like overweight, obesity, high cholesterol, hypertension, and high blood sugar are getting started.

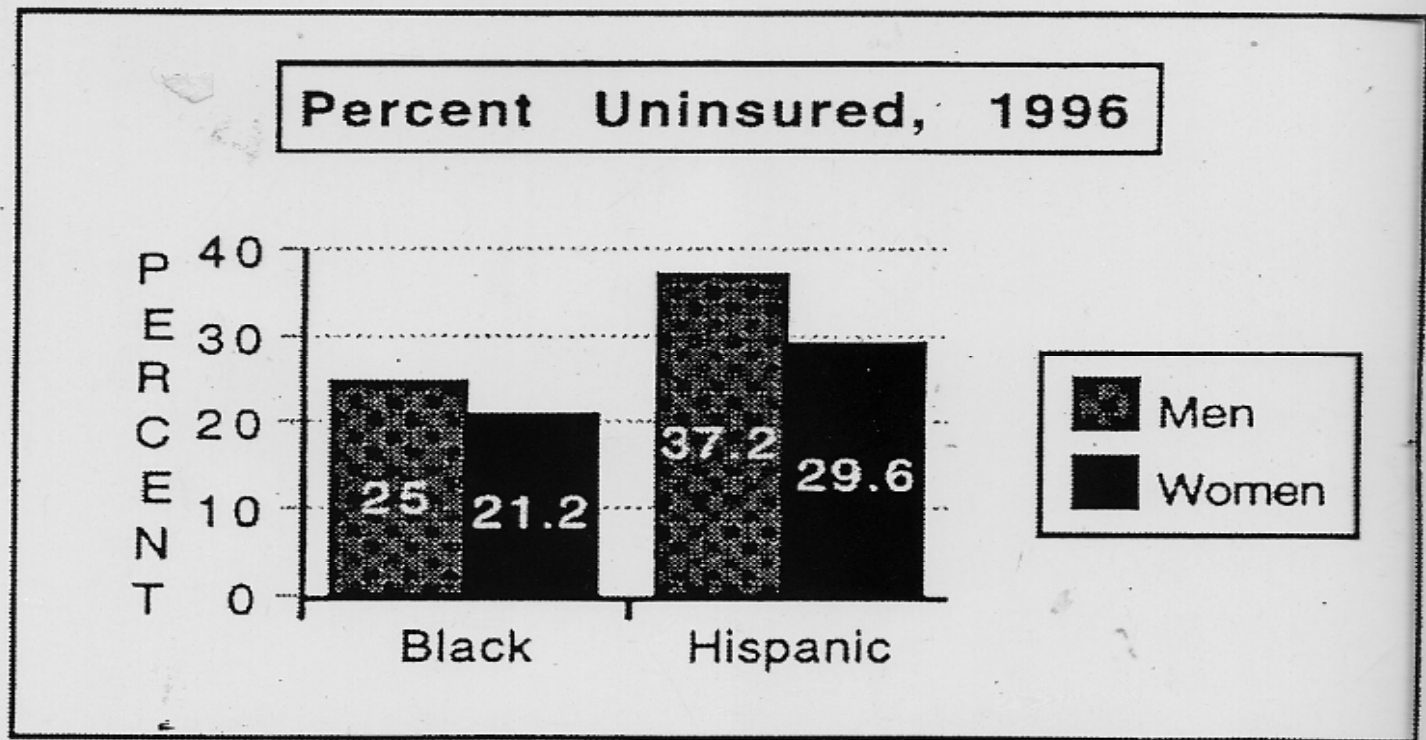
Lack of Physician Contact Among Minority Males

(Graphics © Men's Health Network 2000)



Percent Uninsured Among Minority Males

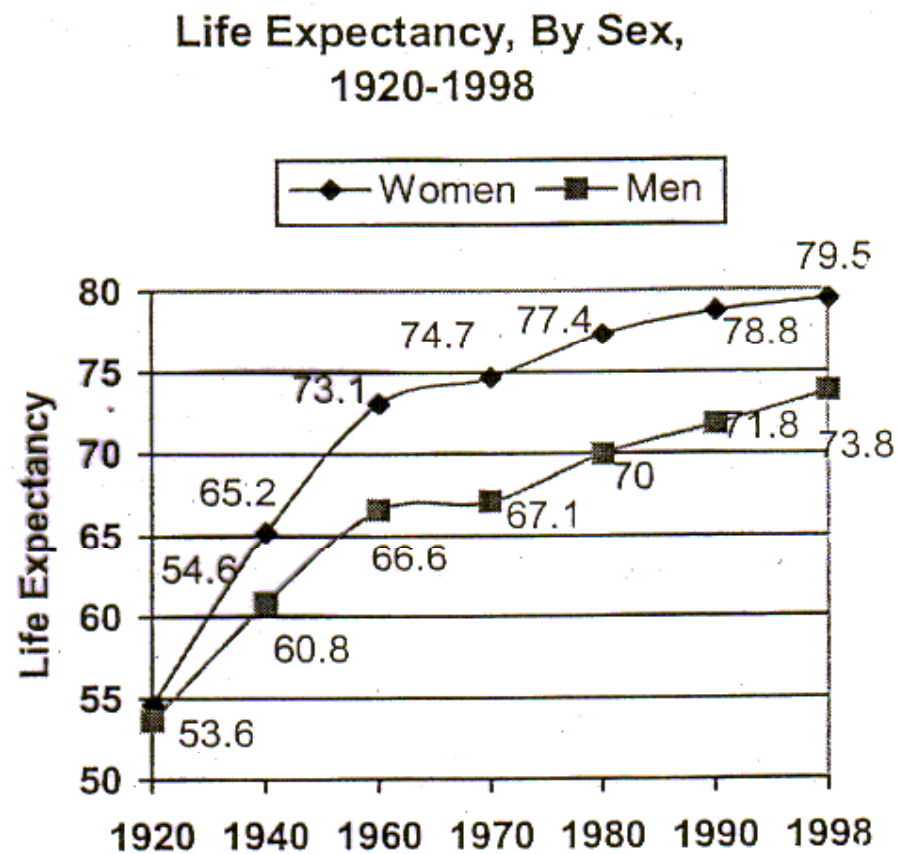
(Graphics © Men's Health Network 2000)



Source: Agency for Health Care Policy and Research: *Racial and Ethnic Differences in Health*, 1996, page 9.

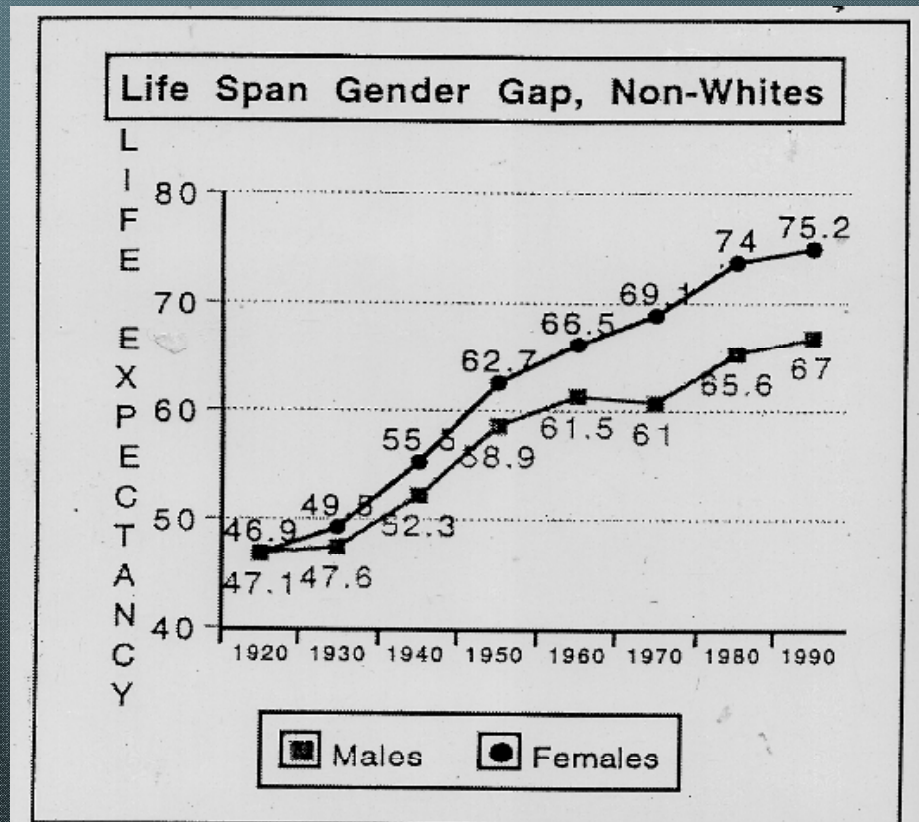
Changes in Life Expectancy by Gender Since 1920

(Graphics © Men's Health Network 2000)



Changes in Life Expectancy by Gender Since 1920, Non-Whites

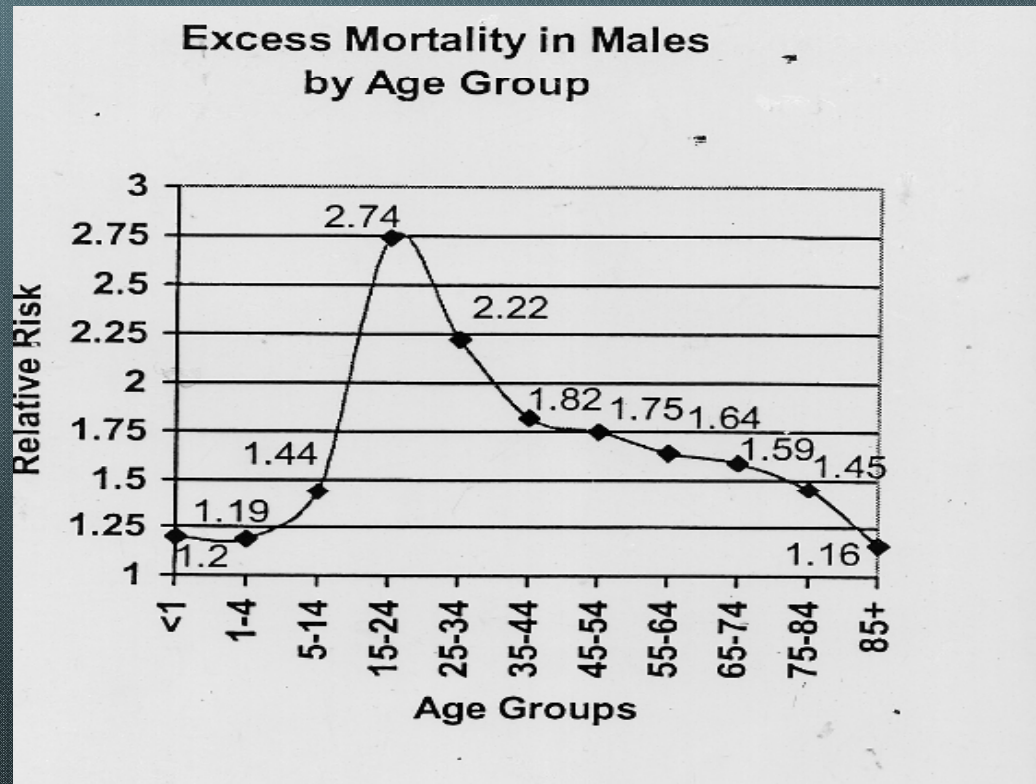
(Graphics © Men's Health Network 2000)



Source: National Center for Health Statistics. Compiled in *Time Almanac*, 1999, p. 811.

Excess Mortality in Males by Age

(Graphics © Men's Health Network 2000)






Men's Health: The Impact on Spouses and Children

Following Widowhood or Disability of Husband:

- 🌐 Grief / loss of long term companion
- 🌐 Burden of care on the wife in disability
- 🌐 Diminished family earnings
- 🌐 The wife is at increased risk of dying.
- 🌐 Older women may have poor prospects for remarriage.
- 🌐 With disability, there may be increased health care expense in the face of diminished earnings.

Heart disease mortality following widowhood: some results from the OPCS Longitudinal Study.

-  *Jones DR* (Office of Population Censuses and Surveys. 1987)
-  As in many earlier studies, some increases in death rates shortly after widowhood are observed.
-  In this study, for deaths from all causes there was a two-fold increase in mortality from all causes in the first month after widowhood.

Men's Health and Women's Poverty



Fiscal implications: Medicaid, food stamps, housing assistance, etc., etc.

More than one-half the elderly widows now living in poverty were not poor before the death of their husbands.

Meeting the Needs of Older Women:
A Diverse and Growing Population,
The Many Faces of Aging,
U.S. Administration on Aging

Economic well-being following marital termination: a comparison of widowed and divorced women.

Morgan LA (1989)

-  Both cross-sectional and longitudinal data suggest that the end of marriage is correlated with higher poverty rates.
-  Findings show that 40% of widows and over 1/4 of divorced women fall into poverty for at least some time during the first 5 years after the end of marriage.

Negative Economic Effects on Society of Male Illness and Premature Death

- 💧 **Lost Time from Work / Diminished Productivity**
- 💧 **Disability: Former Providers Become Dependents**
- 💧 **Former Taxpayers Become Tax Burdens**
- 💧 **Inability to Maintain Gainful Employment due to Chronic Illness Short of Disability**
- 💧 **Widowhood**
- 💧 **Orphaned Children**
- 💧 **Increased Family Health Care Costs**

Men As A Group Are Not Well Engaged In the Health Care System, Owing In Part To:

- 🌐 **Attitudinal and Cultural Barriers**
 - 🌐 **Gender Role Stoicism (a 'man' ignores pain)**
 - 🌐 **Work Role Stoicism (learning to ignore pain to work in manual labor or construction)**
 - 🌐 **Distrust of the Health Care System, e.g. Tuskegee Syphilis Trials**
 - 🌐 **Fatalism: "you' ve got to die of something."**
 - 🌐 **Unhealthy Self-Reliance: "A 'man' takes care of his own problems"**

Other Barriers To Men's Participation in Healthcare

- 🌐 Informational Barriers
 - 🌐 Lack of Information on Men's Health
- 🌐 Health Care System Barriers
 - 🌐 Schedule Conflicts - Work hours conflict with health care service hours for many men.
 - 🌐 Lack of health programs that target males.
 - 🌐 Economic Barriers, e.g., men as a gender are less likely to carry health insurance.

Braithwaite and Taylor: Health Issues in the Black Community

- ◆ Exaggerated, unhealthy stoicism may affect African-American men and (other minority men) out of proportion to other men.
- ◆ Men of minority groups are disproportionately represented in manual labor jobs that are physically painful and hazardous.
- ◆ Traditionally, some dirty, dangerous jobs were actually referred to as “Negro work.”

Changing Things – Men's Health Screenings

- 🌐 In Atlanta, Georgia annual public health screenings were held that showed substantial adult male participation (acknowledgement: James K. Bennett MD)
- 🌐 Men's Health Network has taken health screenings to workplaces so that people who can't easily get to health care have access.
- 🌐 Screenings include blood pressure, glucose, lipids, prostate health, dental health, and healthy lifestyles.

It is customary these days to blame fathers, but is the door really open for fathers?

- 🌐 Before the industrial Revolution, the home was the economic center, and fathers were central figures in the home.
- 🌐 The traveling to the factories took the father out of the home most of the day.
- 🌐 Before 1920, in divorce fathers were routinely awarded child custody, and the divorce rate was less than one percent.
- 🌐 In 1920, the Tender Years Doctrine was introduced, presuming children belonged with their mothers.

Barriers to Involved Fatherhood

- 🌐 The divorce rate is now at least 50%.
- 🌐 The welfare system insisted on the absence of the father before they would help women and children.
- 🌐 Unwed fathers usually have few parental rights, and divorced fathers may lose theirs.
- 🌐 Lawyers make billions of dollars annually from divorce, so the laws might even be slanted to promote family breakup.
- 🌐 Part of society condemns fathers for not being involved while another part tells fathers they are not important at all.

How Media Displayed Fatherhood 1950s-1960's



How Media Displayed Fatherhood 1980s-1990's



A Rising Tide Lifts All Boats

- 🌐 To optimize community health, we need a four pronged approach:
 - 🌐 children's health
 - 🌐 women's health
 - 🌐 men's health
 - 🌐 minority health
- 🌐 The health of both parents is vitally important.
- 🌐 The replacement of the current overly narrow model of maternal and child health by a more inclusive model of *parental* and child health would likely lead to improved children's health outcomes.

**In Conclusion:
So What About Dad?**

**Dads are quite possibly
the world's most
undervalued and
underutilized natural
resource.**

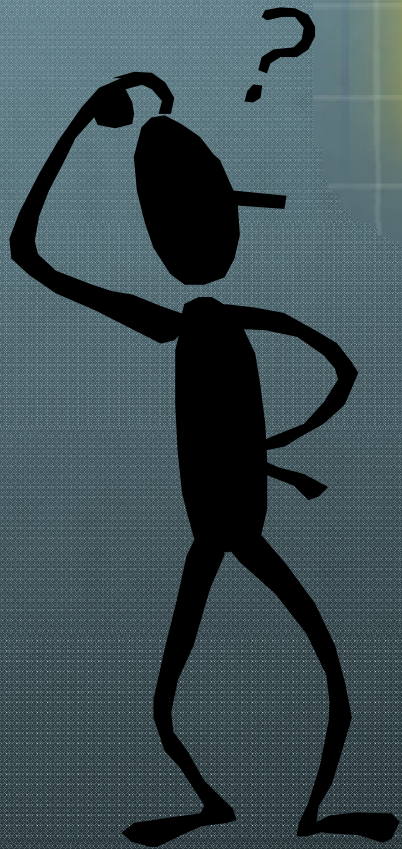
**THANKS FOR YOUR
PARTICIPATION!!**



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A yellow glowing grid containing three icons of people at a whiteboard and a question mark with radiating lines.

It's QUESTION TIME!!