



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> Movember 2016**

# **WHAT'S HAPPENING TO OUR MEN? LIFE'S TRANSITIONS, MENTAL HEALTH & SUICIDAL IDEATION**

On average, Australian men die four years younger than women, live with worse health and carry the greater burden of chronic disease. On the cusp of the hairy season, global men's health charity the Movember Foundation has today released a survey that reveals the true state of men's health around the world, and is urging all Australians to act fast to stop men dying too young.

The five-country survey of over 10,000 men and women shows that men deal with life's big challenges in ways that can have long-term consequences for their physical and mental health.

The research revealed:

- Nearly half (46 per cent) of the men who had been through a stressful life event such as a relationship breakdown or sudden job loss during the past year reported experiencing suicidal thoughts or behaviours
- The men surveyed were more likely than women surveyed to cope with stressful life events in unhealthy ways, such as drinking, drugs, taking more risks and becoming more aggressive
- Men over 40 don't recognise this is the peak age for risk of intentional non-accidental injury, such as self-harm or suicide.

The Movember Foundation commissioned the survey to better understand the core issues affecting men's health and wellbeing to address the crisis affecting men around the world.

Charlotte Webb, Movember Foundation Director for Australia and New Zealand said the survey revealed that losing a job or experiencing a relationship breakdown are difficult times that can rock men to the core.

"Men take their own lives at three times the rate of women. The results of the survey across the five countries exposes the magnitude of men's vulnerability when dealing with particular crisis points in life," said Ms Webb.

Professor Jane Burns, from the University of Sydney, one of the survey's lead authors, said that alarmingly 47 per cent of the men surveyed who had experienced at least one stressful life event over the past 12 months reported suicidal thoughts or behaviours.

The survey also found stark differences in the ways men and women respond to these stressful life events, with men reporting coping behaviours that can affect their health and wellbeing and make life harder in the long run.

For example, the men surveyed were more likely to respond to tough times by increasing alcohol, tobacco or drug consumption (35%), becoming aggressive (21%) and taking more risks (27%).:

The results paint a complex and confronting picture of how men respond during stressful times which may ultimately contribute to health and wellbeing issues that cut men's lives short. They are concerning in light of the well-established links between lifestyle habits and chronic disease such as between alcohol and risk-taking behaviour and between substance abuse and a host of long-term physical and mental health problems.



In many cases, it's a vicious cycle of tough times contributing to poor physical and mental health, that can lead to further health challenges in the future.

"We know that these are times when exercise, good sleep, talking, expert advice, staying connected with friends, and the support of loved ones are vital for coping and can reduce the impact on a man's health and wellbeing," added Ms Webb.

The survey also suggests some men don't necessarily understand how stressful life events might impact their lives, health and wellbeing, and may leave them unprepared and vulnerable. When men aged 40 years and over were asked to identify the major health problems facing their age group, they were far more likely to mention heart disease or lung cancer. Less than 10 per cent identified non-accidental injury (self-harm or suicide), which is in stark contrast with suicide statistics.

The Movember Foundation is a significant funder of men's mental health research. The Foundation supports mental health and suicide prevention programs that encourage men to take action early so they don't reach a point of crisis, and to build strong relationships and stay healthy so that they're more resilient during tough times.

People can support the Movember Foundation's efforts to stop men dying too young by growing a Mo in Movember, taking on the Move challenge and doing something active for men's health or throwing or going to a Movember event. Join the movement at [Movember.com](https://www.movember.com).

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#### **Notes for Editors:**

Case studies of men who have gone through life events (including loss of a job or relationship breakdown) are available.

For more information and to arrange an interview with a Movember Foundation spokesperson or case study in your local area, contact - Molly Hyndman, Movember Foundation.

0418 536 528

[molly.hyndman@movember.com](mailto:molly.hyndman@movember.com)

Please remember to print local help lines should your media outlet choose to share suicide statistics and information. The local numbers are: Lifeline 13 11 14; Suicide Call Back Service 1300 659 467; if life is in danger call 000 or go directly to Emergency Services.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **ABOUT THE MOVEMBER FOUNDATION**

The Movember Foundation is the only charity tackling men's health on a global scale, year round. By 2030, we will reduce the number of men dying prematurely by 25%. The Foundation funds game-changing men's health projects. Millions have joined the movement, raising \$770 million to help us fund over 1,200 projects focusing on prostate cancer, testicular cancer, mental health and suicide prevention.

In addition, our awareness and education program is encouraging men to become more aware of their health, to talk about the big stuff in life, and take action when health issues arise. Our fathers, partners, brothers and friends face a health crisis that isn't being talked about. We can't afford to stay silent. We have one goal: to stop men dying too young.



## ABOUT THE GLOBAL HEALTH & WELLBEING SURVEY

The Global Health & Wellbeing Survey was commissioned by the Movember Foundation and conducted by the Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre (Young & Well CRC) and the University of Sydney's Brain and Mind Centre.

Report main authors: Jane M. Burns, Tracey A. Davenport, Alyssa C. Milton and Ian B. Hickie.

The survey was conducted online in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and United States during late 2015, asking 10,765 people (40 per cent males, 60 per cent females) aged 16 years and older about their health, lifestyle, and perceptions of men's health and wellbeing challenges.

National helpline details were provided to participants who reported high distress, problematic alcohol and/or substance misuse and gambling.

Although targeted recruitment across gender and age was undertaken, this survey is a non-epidemiological sample. Overall, this research does not claim to report population prevalence rates. The use of online surveying and recruitment through social media can result in sampling bias and non-response bias. Avidity bias may also be present whereby individuals with a greater interest in, or experience with, a survey topic may be more likely to respond. Further details of descriptive statistics that are not covered in the full report can also be requested from the research group.

For a copy of the report, please email Molly Hyndman – [molly.hyndman@movember.com](mailto:molly.hyndman@movember.com).