



## **Movember urges men to take care of their health as life expectancy gap between men and women begins to widen again after 40 years**

The gap between male and female life expectancy in the UK has begun to widen again, after narrowing steadily for almost four decades, reinforcing Movember's call for a greater focus on men's health and empowerment of men to take action to improve their health.

An analysis of official figures has shown that the difference in life expectancy between men and women in the UK dropped from six years in 1982-1984 down to 3.6 years in 2016-2018.<sup>i</sup>

However, prior to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the gap in life expectancy between men and women began to widen again and in 2017-2019 stood at 3.7 years. The gap further expanded in 2018-20 to 3.9 years, largely driven by higher mortality rates in men from COVID-19.

The impact of COVID-19 has also caused a fall in male life expectancy for the first time in 40 years. A baby boy born between 2018 and 2020 is expected to live until he is 79 years old, while estimates for women remained broadly unchanged, with girls born in 2018-20 likely to live for 82.9 years.

The men's health charity, which today launched its 15<sup>th</sup> annual fundraising campaign in the UK, said the figures highlighted the ongoing crisis in men's health.

Movember CEO Michelle Terry said: "Women outlive men everywhere in the world. <sup>ii</sup>However, in the UK, the gender gap had been gradually narrowing since the 1980s until 2017-2019, when it began to widen again.

"We know that men have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19 which is why male life expectancy has fallen back to levels not seen since 2012-2014. But, in addition to this, there are other reasons that men's health remains unnecessarily poor and some of the causes of the disparity between men and women's life expectancies are preventable."

The charity, which focuses on raising funds and awareness for mental health and suicide prevention, prostate cancer, and testicular cancer, is urging men to take control of their health.

Michelle Terry says: "For many men, taking care of their health isn't high on their list of priorities – at least until they get older, or a problem becomes impossible to ignore. But there are some simple steps you can take to load the dice in your favour and increase your chances of living a longer, healthier, happier life."

1 Notice change to both your physical and mental health and take action

You can increase your chances of living longer by dealing with any health problems quickly. If you're worried about something, get it checked out, and if you're offered screening, take advantage of it.



Find out if your parents, grandparents, aunts or uncles suffered from any serious illness, especially if they died prematurely, and share that information with your GP.

Data from NHS England shows 12,000 fewer men received a first treatment for prostate cancer from April 2020 to May 2021 due to a drop in referrals. If you think something might be wrong, don't be afraid to speak to your GP about it or seek a second opinion.

## **2 Know your cancer risk**

Testicular cancer is the most common cancer in young men, and in most cases the outcome for men with testicular cancer is positive, however early detection is key. Be sure to check yourself regularly – it's as simple as carefully and gently rolling one testicle at a time between thumb and forefinger – the shower is a great place to do this.

Prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer overall in UK men, and the risk of the developing it increases with age.

If you're 50, you should be talking to your doctor about your prostate risk and whether you might need a PSA [prostate-specific antigen] blood test. If you're black or have a family history of prostate cancer, you are 2.5 times more likely to get it, and will need to start that conversation at 45.

## **3 Take care of your mental health**

A six-month research project\* from Movember on the impact of the pandemic showed that three in five men (58%) suffered from poor wellbeing, and a third (29%) met the World Health Organisation's criteria for depression. It also found more than half of men surveyed (54%) believe Covid has had a permanent impact on their mental health.

Movember encourages talking to people you trust when times get tough and speaking to a health professional when you need to. Confiding in someone about an issue that's bothering you can help you stay mentally healthy. It isn't a sign of emotional weakness – getting someone else's perspective can help you see a situation in a new light.

In return, research suggests that supporting a mate in bad times also creates positive feelings in oneself, giving a feeling of purpose and self-worth.

## **4 Move more**

The NHS recommends adults do some type of physical activity every day to reduce the risk of health problems such as heart disease or stroke. Not only does exercise benefit your physical health it also raises self-esteem and positively changes your mood.



Signing up to [‘move’ for Movember](#) is a great excuse to kick start a new routine or motivation to continue with your current regime.

## **5 Get your jabs**

Make sure to keep on top of your jabs as we head into winter.

Guidance from the NHS shows more people are likely to get flu this winter as fewer people will have built up natural immunity to it during the pandemic. Additionally, if you get both Covid-19 and flu at the same time, research shows you’re more likely to be seriously ill.

Globally, men are significantly more likely than women to become seriously ill from Covid-19 and twice as likely to die from the disease.<sup>iii</sup> Yet in the UK, uptake of the Covid-19 vaccine is lower in men than in women.

The NHS recommends getting vaccinated against both flu and Covid-19, to protect yourself and those around you from both these serious illnesses, and if you are offered both vaccines, it’s safe to have them at the same time. The flu vaccine is free for some groups, including those over 50.

## **6 Sign up to take part in Movember**

Rooted in fun, Movember provides an opportunity to time to come together while also raising funds for lifesaving research and programs aimed at helping our fathers, brothers, friends and sons from dying too young.

Not only does signing up help the men in your life, but research commissioned last year\*\* also showed men who take part in the annual campaign are more likely to report better mental health and wellbeing than the general male population.

Movember supporters tend to be more physically active, better understand the risk factors for prostate cancer and are more likely to carry out testicular self-examination checks than those who did not take part in the campaign

Raise funds and awareness this November by growing a moustache, committing to moving over 60km in the month, hosting a mo-moment, or ‘mo-ing’ your own way.

Sign up now at [uk.movember.com](http://uk.movember.com)

*-ends-*

### **Notes to Editor:**

Media contact: Briony FitzGerald, PR Manager [briony.fitzgerald@movember.com](mailto:briony.fitzgerald@movember.com) / 07340 405 063



---

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/lifeexpectancies/bulletins/nationallifetablesunitedkingdom/2018to2020>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.bmj.com/content/365/bmj.l1631>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-020-19741-6>

#### **\* About the research**

The research was commissioned by Movember and conducted by The Good Side, a UK-based insights and social change agency. The quantitative survey was conducted over two waves in November 2020 and January 2021 with a total of 3,000 men surveyed representative of the national population in the UK (1,000 men), Canada (1,000 men) and Australia (1,000 men). In addition, 800 men identified as representing specific target audiences for Movember's media intervention work in the UK, Canada and Australia were also included in the sample. The 20 minute survey asked men about their mental health during COVID-19, and explored themes around relationships, social connection, loneliness, dealing with pressures during COVID-19, masculinity in today's world and their outlook for the future.

The World Health Organisation Five Well-Being Index (WHO-5) is a self-reported measure of current mental wellbeing and depression screening in the last two weeks.

#### **\*\* About the research**

YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 8419 adults (3951 males). In the UK (of which 957 were males), US (of which 1220 were males), Canada (of which 799 were males) and Australia (of which 975 were males). Fieldwork was undertaken between 29th September - 13th October 2020. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of adults 18+ in all countries. The figures have been given an even weighting for each country to produce an 'average' value.

#### **About Movember**

Movember is the leading charity changing the face of men's health on a global scale, focusing on mental health and suicide prevention, prostate cancer and testicular cancer.

The charity raises funds to deliver innovative, breakthrough research and support programmes that enable men to live happier, healthier and longer lives. Committed to disrupting the status quo, millions have joined the movement, helping fund over 1,250 projects around the world.

In addition to tackling key health issues faced by men, Movember is working to encourage men to stay healthy in all areas of their life, with a focus on men staying socially connected and becoming more open to discussing their health and significant moments in their lives.

The charity's vision is to have an everlasting impact on the face of men's health. To donate or learn more, please visit [Movember.com](https://www.movember.com).