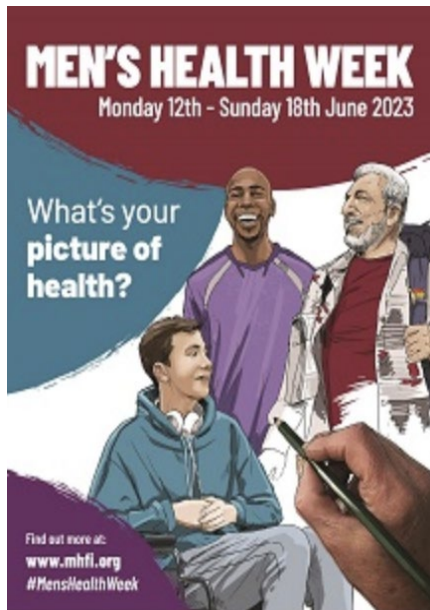


[Inter]National perspectives on men's health policy: Key lessons learned from Ireland



Men's Sheds as a setting
for promoting men's
health

Monday 12th June 2023

Dr Noel Richardson,

Director, National Centre for Men's Health, South East Technological
University, Carlow, Ireland

Noel.richardson@setu.ie



Overview of Presentation

Men's health policy

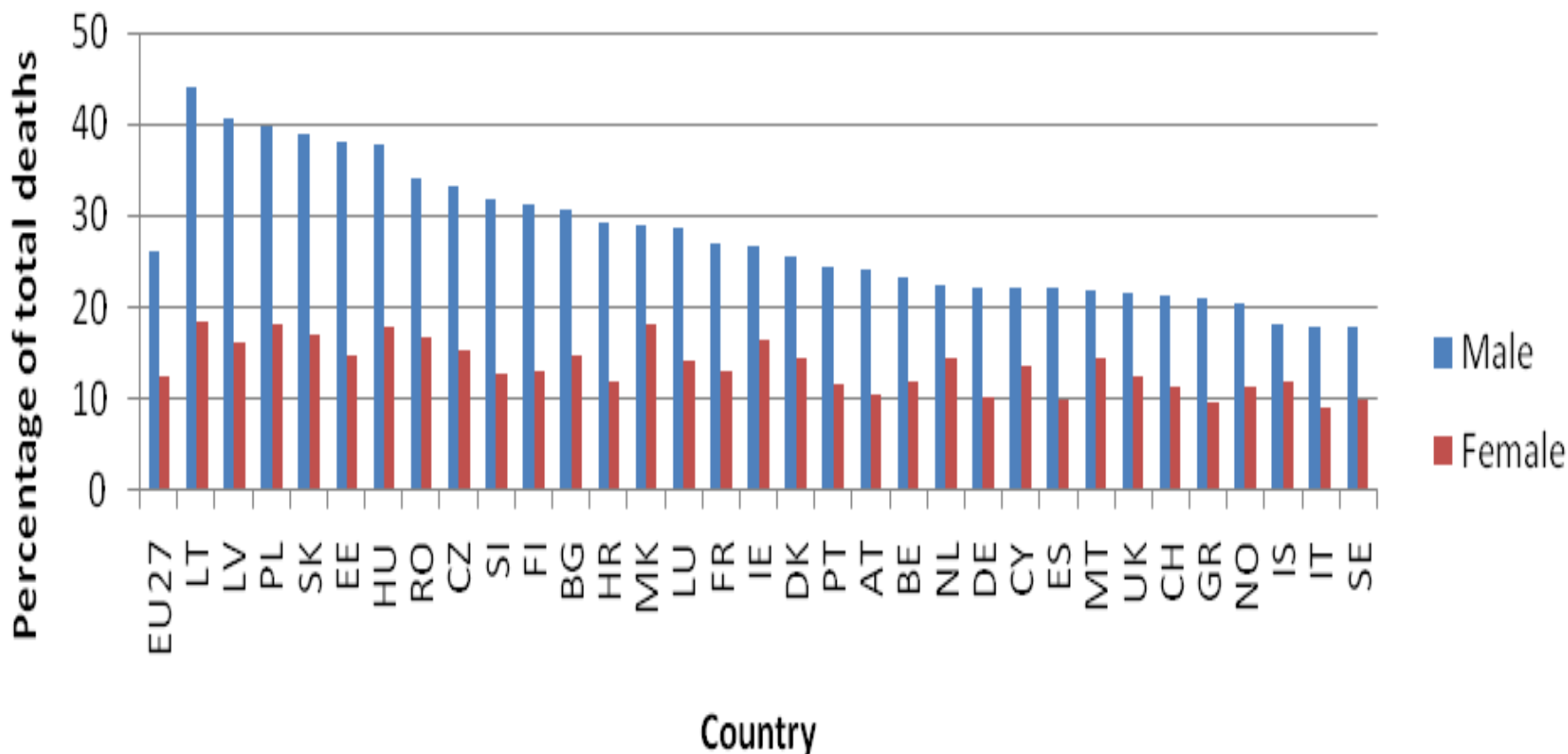
1. Men's health policy context: international perspective
 - Landmark publications
 - Getting men's health on policy agendas
 - Gender transformative approaches to men's health
2. Men's health policy context Ireland
 - Principles guiding policy implementation
 - Key lessons learned

Men's Sheds

1. Exponential growth of Sheds in Ireland
2. Overview of Shed culture and ethos, Shed operations
3. 'Sheds for Life' (a health promotion programme for men in Sheds)
 - scoping work/formative evaluation
 - overview of Sheds for Life
 - impact

Conclusion and key take-home messages

Deaths in 15-64 age range as a percentage of total deaths, by sex and country, latest year





GENDER AND NONCOMMUNICABLE DISEASES IN EUROPE

Analysis of STEPS data



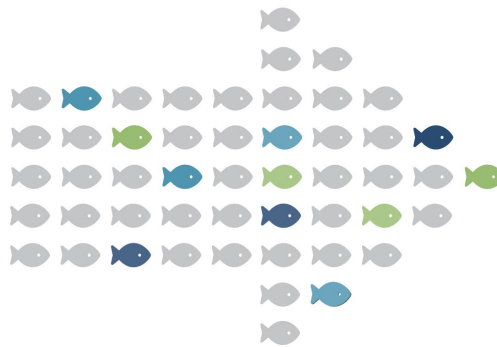
WHY USING A GENDER APPROACH CAN ACCELERATE NONCOMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION AND CONTROL IN THE WHO EUROPEAN REGION

WHO EUROPEAN HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE ON NONCOMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Time to Deliver: meeting NCD targets to achieve Sustainable Development Goals in Europe
9-10 April 2019, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan



FROM THE MARGINS TO THE MAINSTREAM



Advocating the inclusion of men's health in policy.
A SCOPING STUDY

A report from Global Action on Men's Health



The health and well-being of men in the WHO European Region: better health through a gender approach



WHO HEALTH EVIDENCE NETWORK SYNTHESIS REPORT 70

Mental health, men and culture: how do sociocultural constructions of masculinities relate to men's mental health help-seeking behaviour in the WHO European Region?

Brendan Gough | Irina Novikova

A gender transformative agenda for men's health

Strengthening governance for the health and well-being of men

Engaging men to achieve gender equality in health

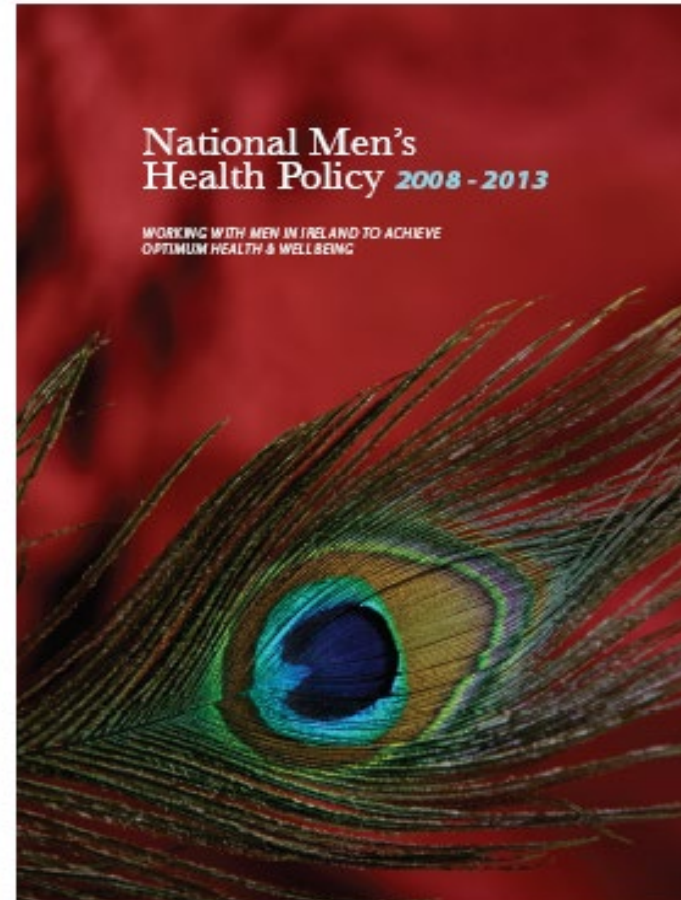
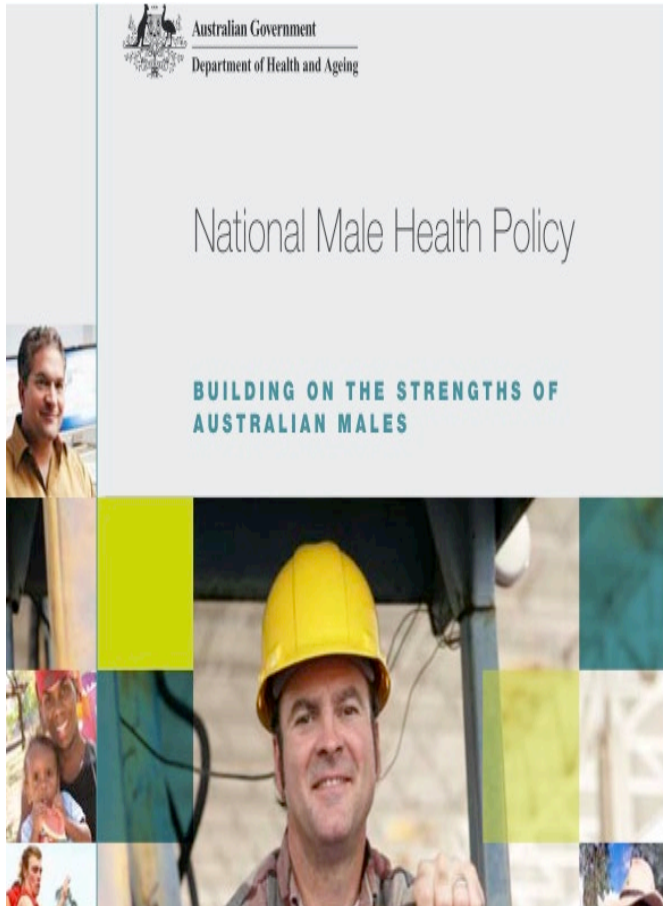
Making health systems gender-responsive

Improving health promotion

Building a strong evidence base



The invisibility of men...



Google Scholar

"men's health policy"

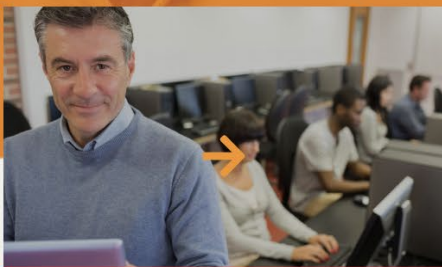
Articles

About 374 results (0.03 sec)

Key aspects of Governance

- National Implementation Group
- Annual Plan & Progress Report
- Alignment with National and other Policy Priority Areas
- External Review
- Communications Strategy
- Links to Gender Mainstreaming Framework
- An Explicit Focus on Evaluation, Research & Knowledge Transfer
- Cross departmental work difficult but some inroads made

Key Capacity Building Measure: ENGAGE



UNITS 1-5

Engaging Men in Health

Engaging Men in Health Unit 1-5 of the Engage Programme: The 'Engage' training programme aims to increase participants' understanding of best practice in engaging men with health and social services.



UNIT 6

Connecting with Young Men

Connecting with Young Men Unit 6 of the Engage Programme: To assist a broad range of practitioners to effectively engage with young men on mental health and wellbeing issues.



UNIT 7

Men in the Middle

Men in the Middle Unit 7 of the Engage Programme: To assist a broad range of practitioners and service providers to develop practical strategies for effectively engaging with middle-aged men around mental health and wellbeing issues.



UNIT 8

On Feirm Ground

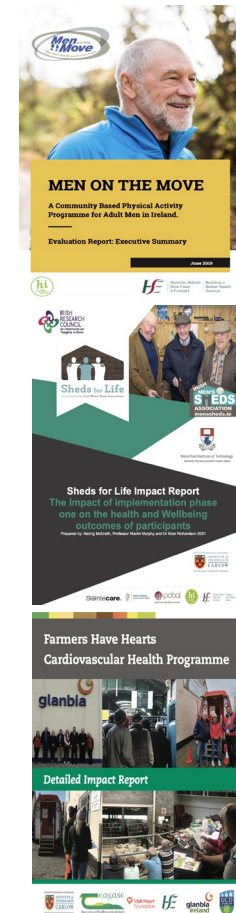
On Feirm Ground – Wellbeing for Farmers Unit 8 of the Engage Programme: to equip frontline agricultural advisors with the knowledge, skills and competencies to engage and signpost farmers on health issues and to mainstream a health promotion focus into routine farming extension activities.

Building a Strong Evidence Base with a Focus on Knowledge Transfer



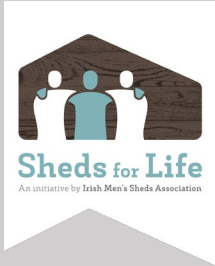
Engaging men in health: Using gendered approaches

- Finding ‘the hook’
- Reaching out to men in community settings
- Focus on ‘doing’
- Connecting masculine ideals (autonomy, control, resilience) with being healthy
- Using positive messaging to promote change without amplifying guilt/shame
- Using testimonials to encourage other men to take ownership of their health
- Using established ‘men-friendly’ approaches (self-monitoring, goal-setting, peer-support, friendly competition, social interaction, camaraderie and team spirit, and branding)

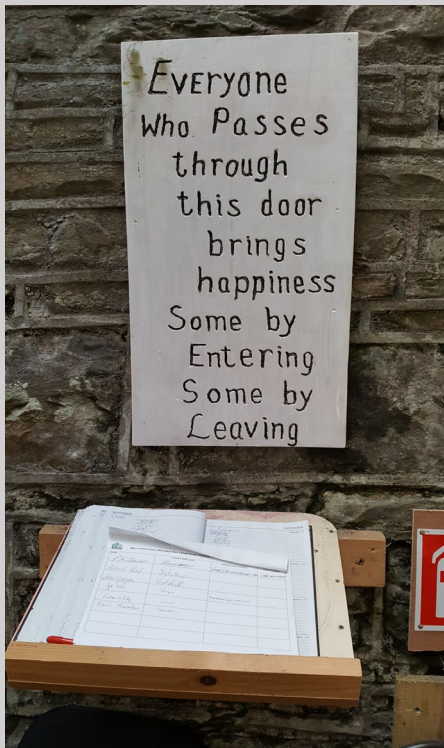


Key Lessons Learned

1. Without strong governance, policy is aspirational
2. Leadership and advocacy are essential to get men's health on the policy agenda and to keep it there
3. Integration and alignment with broader health policy is crucial
4. Key pillars of policy implementation are community engagement, capacity building, working in partnership and sustainability
5. Importance of growing an evidence base and embedding research and evaluation in all work undertaken
6. Alliances and synergies with other sectors [outside of health; e.g. agriculture] are based on a win-win for both
7. The need for patience in policy implementation
8. Have a communications strategy and profile successes
9. Having a dedicated Men's Health Action Plan continues to offer a roadmap and mandate for action
10. Excellent relationships with women's health; yet Gender Mainstreaming has not worked!
11. Need to target those sub-populations of men most in need in appropriate settings and at critical transition points in men's lives



MEN'S SHEDS



Men's Sheds
Organic
Health
Promotion

Open to all
men

Pressure free
environment



Grassroots,
member
focused &
autonomous

Friendship &
Social
support

Community-
Based

Skill sharing,
Group
projects &
activities

- Sense of purpose
- Belonging
- Social Support

Why Men's Sheds?



Non-clinical



Pressure Free



Male-specific

Teamwork

Inclusive

Familiar



Camaraderie

Purpose

Social Support

Skills sharing

Belonging

Informal



Safety

Grassroots

Community





International
Mens Sheds
Organisation



International Men's Shed Organisation

Canadian Men's Shed Association

Mænds Modesteder (Denmark)



Irish Men's Sheds Association

MENZSHED® New Zealand

Scottish Men's Sheds Association



UK Men's Sheds Association

US Men's Sheds Association

Men's Sheds Cymru (Wales)



JOURNAL ARTICLE

'Sheds for Life': getting the balance right in delivering health promotion *through Sheds in Ireland*

[Get access >](#)

Niamh Bergin, Noel Richardson 

Health Promotion International, Volume 36, Issue 3, June 2021, Pages 605–615,

<https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/daaa082>

Published: 24 August 2020



Health Promotion programmes targeting Sheds need to:

- (i) acknowledge and build upon the health-enhancing 'essence' of Sheds
- (ii) invest in relationships, establish credibility and tailor SFL programme content and delivery to individual Sheds.
- (iii) have a coherent and sustainable implementation strategy and be clear on the 'rules of engagement' (relaxed, informal and flexible approach)

Oral Health



Cancer Awareness



Getting Online



Diabetes Awareness



safeTALK: Suicide Prevention



CPR



Dementia Awareness



Starts with:
Health Check



Weekly Physical Activity



10

Weeks

Healthy Eating & Cooking Skills



Mental Health Workshop



Mental Health Ireland

Selected outcomes



79.6% were referred to their GP (41.7% reported visiting their GP)



Significant improvements in self-rated health, days physically active, mental wellbeing, comfort in having a conversation about mental health, life satisfaction, social capital, confidence in cooking and preparing own meals, knowledge and awareness of health issues



Value for money (as measured by QALYs - Quality-adjusted life years)

Key take-home messages

- Men's Sheds are inherently health promoting
- 'Successful' Men's Sheds have appropriate shed facilities, sufficient funding and participant-driven management and organization of the shed
- Men's sheds demonstrate great promise in supporting social connectedness, enhancing community development and promoting healthy lifestyles for men
- Health promotion programmes in the Shed setting should be co-designed with Sheddors and should respect the ethos of Sheds as highly variable, autonomous, non-structured spaces.
- Sheddors should assume the role of key decision makers from programme design to implementation/evaluation

Key take-home message...

- The value of having a National Men's Health Policy:
 - identifies men's health as a priority area
 - creates a vision, identity and branding for 'men's health'
 - provides a framework for action and roadmap for practitioners
 - gives leverage to initiating/expanding men's health work
 - supports intersectional and gender transformative approaches to service and programme delivery
 - offers an opportunity to apply a gender lens to other policy agendas...

Key References

- Bergin, N. & Richardson N. (2020). 'Sheds for Life': getting the balance right in delivering health promotion through Sheds in Ireland. Health Promotion International: <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/daaa082>
- Foettinger L, Albrecht BM, Altgeld T, Gansefort D, Recke C, Stalling I, Bammann K. The Role of Community-Based Men's Sheds in Health Promotion for Older Men: A Mixed-Methods Systematic Review. Am J Mens Health. 2022 Mar-Apr;16(2):15579883221084490. doi: 10.1177/15579883221084490. PMID: 35287514; PMCID: PMC8928410.
- Kelly D, Teasdale S, Steiner A, Mason H. Men's Sheds in Scotland: the potential for improving the health of men. J Public Health Policy. 2021 Jun;42(2):258-270. doi: 10.1057/s41271-020-00268-5. Epub 2021 Feb 4. PMID: 33542483; PMCID: PMC8192322.
- Global Action on Men's Health (2020). From the margins to the mainstream. Advocating the inclusion of men's health in policy. A scoping study. <https://gamh.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/From-the-Margins-to-The-Mainstream-Report.pdf>
- Lefkowich M. & Richardson N. (2016). Men's health in alternative spaces: Exploring Men's Sheds in Ireland: International Health Promotion (In press; accepted for publication December 2016). doi 10.1093/heapro/daw09
- McGrath A, Murphy N, Richardson N. Study protocol: evaluation of sheds for life (SFL): a community-based men's health initiative designed "for shedders by shedders" in Irish Men's sheds using a hybrid effectiveness-implementation design. BMC Public Health. 2021 Apr 26;21(1):801. doi: 10.1186/s12889-021-10823-8. PMID: 33902508; PMCID: PMC8192322.
- McGrath, A., Murphy, N., Egan, T., Ormond, G. & Richardson, N. (2022). 'Understanding Shedders: which sociodemographic, health and wellbeing characteristics best inform appropriate health promotion action and a 'Shed for Life'? Health Promotion Journal of Australia. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1002/hpja.649>
- McGrath, A., Murphy, N., Egan, T., Ormond, G. & Richardson, N (2022). An Economic Evaluation of 'Sheds for Life' a Community-Based Men's Health Initiative for Men's Sheds in Ireland. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19: 2204 doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19042204
- McGrath, A., Murphy, N., Egan, T. & Richardson, N. (2022). Sheds for life: health and wellbeing outcomes of a tailored community-based health promotion initiative for men's sheds in Ireland. BMC Public Health, 22(1), 1590. doi:10.1186/s12889-022-13964-6
- McGrath, A., Richardson, N. & Murphy, N. (2022). Strategies for effective implementation and scale-up of a multi-level co-designed men's health initiative 'Sheds for Life' in Irish Men's Sheds. *Frontiers in Health Services: Implementation Science*: 940034 <https://doi.org/10.3389/frhs.2022.940034>
- McGrath, A., Murphy, N. & Richardson, N. (2022). 'Sheds for Life': delivering a gender-transformative approach to health promotion in Men's Sheds. *Health Promotion International* 37(6), daac150. <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/daac150>
- Richardson N & Carroll P (2009). Getting men's health onto a policy agenda – charting the development of a national men's health policy in Ireland. *Journal of Men's Health*: Vol 6, No 2; 105-113
- Richardson N. & Carroll P. (2018) It's not rocket science - the case for a policy focus on men's health. *International Journal of Men's Social and Community Health* 1(1) e1-e13. <https://doi.org/10.22374/ijmsch.v1iSP1>.
- Southcombe A, Cavanagh J, Bartram T. Capacity building in indigenous men's groups and sheds across Australia. Health Promot Int. 2015 Sep;30(3):606-15. doi: 10.1093/heapro/dat092. Epub 2014 Jan 7. PMID: 24399032.