Beyond the Stereotypes: Strategies for Improving Men's Health

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No Disclosures

Educational Objectives

- Recognize the contributing factors to men’s health disparities
- Explore masculine stereotypes and misconceptions that negatively affect men’s health
- Apply evidence-based, culturally mindful strategies to improve men’s health

Why Men's Health?

- Men make up nearly 50% of our population
- Men have unique health needs
- Understanding the needs of men can improve quality of care and life expectancies

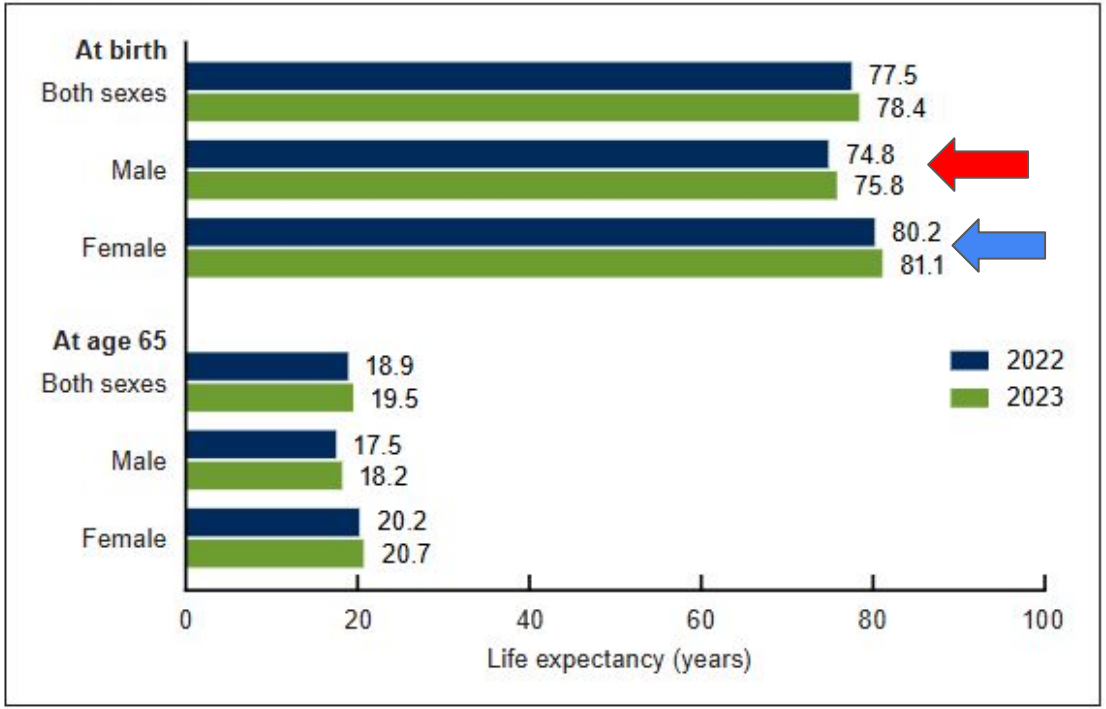
Image Source: Envato Elements

What is the Disparity?

- Men live nearly 7 years less than women
- Have higher rates of heart disease, cancer compared to women
- Have higher rates of injury related deaths
- Are more likely to die from homicide

(Conner et al., 2021; Courtenay, 2000)

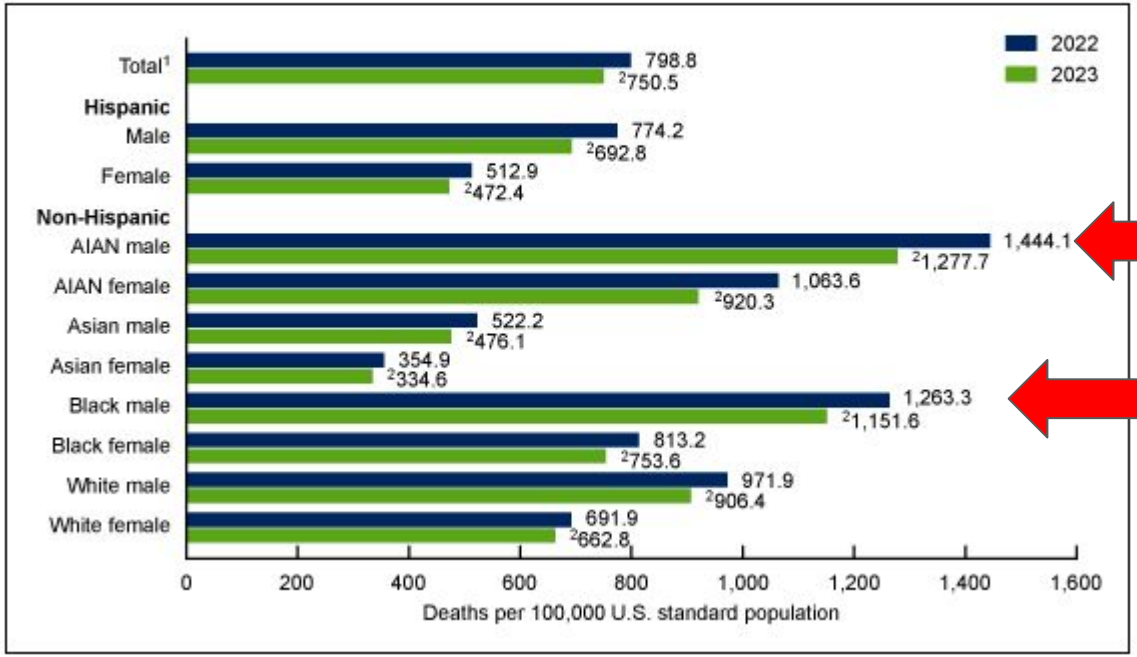
Figure 1. Life expectancy at birth and age 65, by sex: United States, 2022 and 2023



SOURCE: National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System, mortality data file.

Men's Health Disparities (Racial Inequities)

Figure 2. Age-adjusted death rate, by race and Hispanic origin and sex: United States, 2022 and 2023



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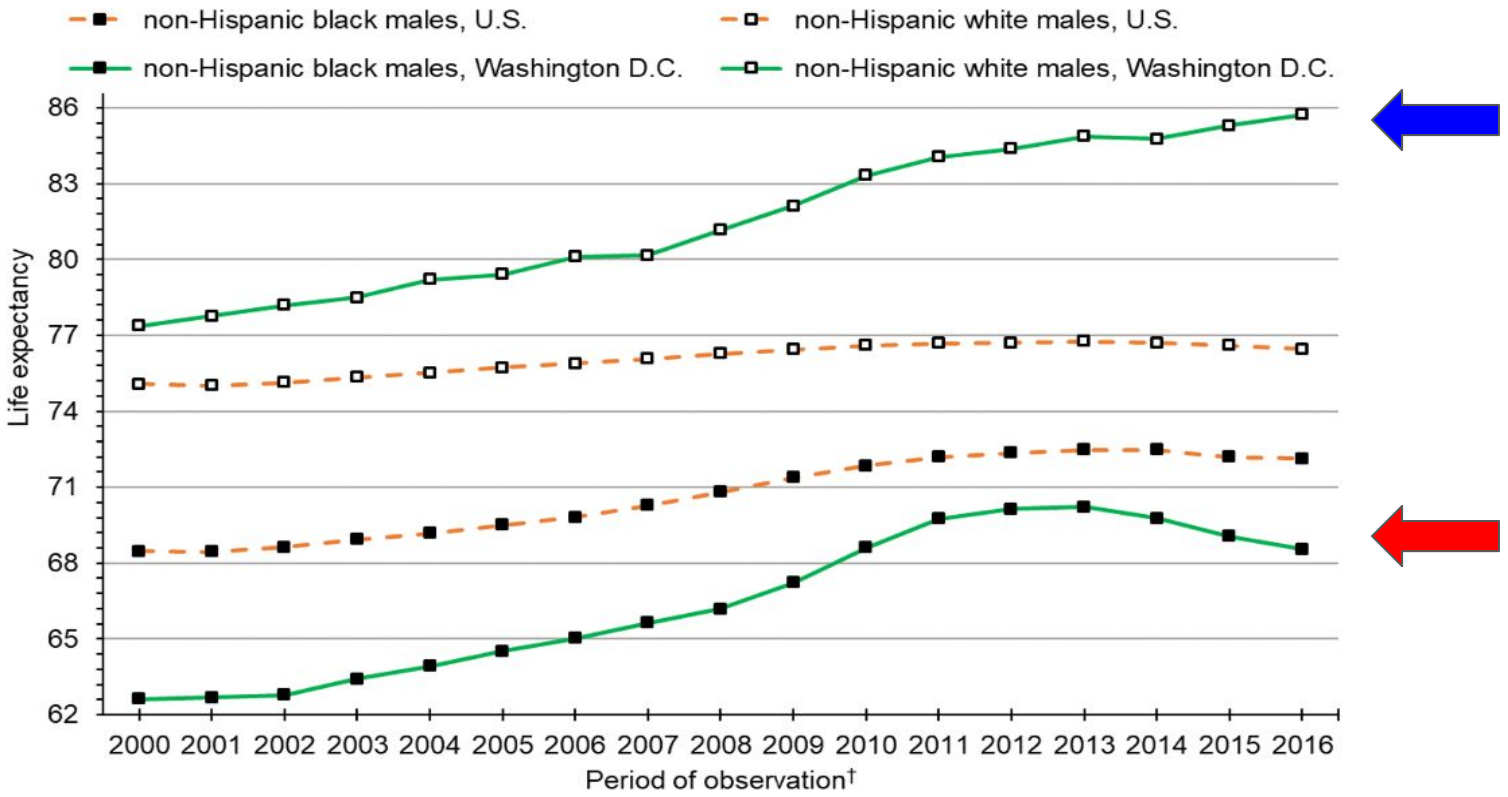

Roberts M, Reither EN, Lim S. Contributors to the black-white life expectancy gap in Washington D.C. *Sci Rep*. 2020;10(1):13416. doi:10.1038/s41598-020-70046-6

Men’s Health Disparities (LGBTQ)

Have higher rates of…

- HIV
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Stigmatization

(Pachankis et al., 2019)

Image Source: Envato Elements

Men’s Health Disparities (Mental Health)

- More likely to self medicate with substances
- Higher rates of death from suicide
- Less likely to seek treatment for mental health

(Sagar-Ouriaghil et al., 2019)

Image Source: Envato Elements

What are the contributing factors?

Conflicting Priorities

- Maintaining employment
- Financial responsibilities
- Family obligations
- Personal time

Image Source: Envato Elements

Poor Health Service Utilization

Men are less likely to seek help for physical or mental health issues compared to women

(Addis & Mahalik, 2003)

Image Source: Envato Elements

Mistrust of the Healthcare System

- Billing and insurance skepticism
- Poor patient-provider interactions
- Fear

(Rony et al., 2023)

Image Source: Envato Elements

Lack of Male-Focused Health Education

- Lack of a specific “men’s health” field of medicine
- Lack of men’s health curriculum in health profession programs
- Lack of men’s health research
- Lack of men’s health policy

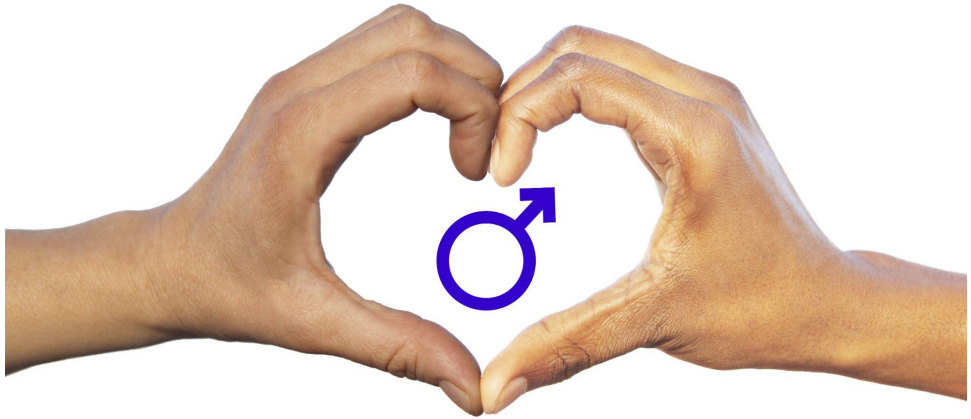

Image Source: Envato Elements

What are the consequences?

- Lack of consistent medical care
- Higher rates of preventable chronic illnesses
- Increased overall morbidity and mortality

Image Source: Envato Elements

Common Masculinity Stereotypes and Misconceptions

“Masculine Code”

- Men are Warriors
- Men are Providers
- Men are Protectors

Image Source: Envato Elements

Real Men Show No Weakness…

- Self sufficient
- Ready for a fight
- Take risks
- Socially and physically dominant

(DeGue et al., 2023)

Image Source: Drew Struzan

Real Men Don’t Seek Mental Health Treatment…

- Women have higher rates of diagnosed depression, but men are ***four times*** more likely to die by suicide

  (Oliffe & Phillips, 2008)

Image Source: Envato Elements

Healthcare is a “Feminine” Topic…

Image Source: Envato Elements

Men don’t care about their health…

How Can PAs Improve Men’s Health?

Start With Awareness

Some men…

- Don’t want to see a healthcare provider unless absolutely necessary
- May be skeptical of your intentions
- Require more patience and understanding

Image Source: Envato Elements

Build Authentic Relationships

- Check your own personal bias
- Be present and ***listen*** to your patient
- Be honest and transparent

(Khullar, 2019)

Image Source: Envato Elements

Identify Values and Goals

- “What matters the most to you?
- “What are your long term goals”
- “How does your health affect your ability to achieve those goals?”

Image Source: Envato Elements

Co-Create a Health Plan

1. **Mental Wellness:**
   - Stress management
   - Identifying support systems
   - Provide resources

2. **Physical Wellness:**
   - Establish routine care (i.e physicals)
   - Disease prevention education (i.e diet, exercise)
   - Promote follow-ups***

Image Source: Envato Elements

Incorporate the Family

- Leverage the common “provider/protector mentality
- Encourage family activities (i.e meal prepping, physical fitness)
- Emphasize the importance of legacy

Image Source: Envato Elements

Encourage Follow-Ups (Critical!)

- Necessary for establishing consistent care (i.e physicals)
- Only possible ***after*** establishing trust and rapport
- Should be based on accountability

Image Source: Envato Elements

Key Takeaways

- Most men care about their health
- Avoiding harmful “masculine” stereotypes and misconceptions is critical for improving the health of men
- PAs can take the lead by partnering with our patients to improve their health

Image source: Envato Elements

Group Discussion

1. What has been your experience engaging with men in the clinical setting
2. Are there other strategies that you found helpful for improving men's health?

Image Source: Envato Elements

Image Source: Envato Elements

Thank You!!

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