

# emale

IMPROVING MALE HEALTH & WELLBEING

ISSUE 162 SEPTEMBER OCTOBER 2017

A photograph of two men smiling outdoors. The man on the left has dark hair and a beard, wearing a blue t-shirt. The man on the right is wearing a white baseball cap with a blue logo and a pink button-down shirt. They are standing in front of green foliage.

**Crisis in male employment**  
**Men are carers too..**  
**Depression gender differences**  
**More tech - less social?**  
**Why men don't take "female" jobs"**  
**Benefits of yoga**

## Silent Crisis In Male Employment

Australia is experiencing a mass exodus of working-age men from the labour force, according to a landmark report released this month by the Institute of Public Affairs.

The report *The Disappearing Australian Working Man* by Institute of Public Affairs Research Fellow Gideon Rozner, argues that the official unemployment rate has become a misleading measure of joblessness, as it only measures those without work as a percentage of the labour force – that is, people who are actively seeking work. “A more reliable figure is the work-to-population ratio, which measures employment as a percentage of the overall population, not just the labour force,” said IPA Research Fellow Gideon Rozner.

“**More than one in five** working-age males are out of work, with a work-to-population ratio of just 79 per cent among men between 20 and 54, according the most recently-available census data. This is a sharp drop from a rate of over 96 per cent in the 1950s.” “The disconnect between the cyclical (and relatively low) rate of unemployment and the continual decline in the overall male work rates can be explained by an increase in the **not-in-labour-force (NILF) rate: Men who are neither working, nor looking for work**. This figure has been rising steadily since the ABS started measuring it in the late 1970’s. While sluggish economic performance does tend to accelerate growth in the NILF rate, alarmingly, there has never been a commensurate decrease when times are good. Statistically, once Australian men leave the labour force, they are unlikely to come back.”



This is a problem unique to men, workforce participation rates among women have increased during the same period. The report examines the causes of this male flight from work, but does not find strong links to economic or social changes. “There is little evidence that falling male work rates are caused by changes in the labour market, nor societal changes, such as increased enrolments in tertiary education or males taking on a greater share of unpaid domestic and childcare responsibilities.” Instead, it appears that falling male work rates appear to be driven by welfare entitlements, which have enabled men to subsist outside the work force.

“Alarmingly, the growth in joblessness has a strong correlation with the expansion of welfare entitlements during the same period, particularly the disability support pension. The growth in Australia’s welfare state has subsidised the male flight from work. Soaring joblessness rates have serious consequences. Not only do the long-term unemployed suffer from lower incomes and poorer living standards, but many studies have indicated that joblessness affects mental and even physical health. Worst of all, the problem risks becoming an intergenerational one. Children without working parents are more likely to be jobless themselves as adults. We must reform our welfare system and industrial relations laws to get more of these men back into the labour market, or risk creating a permanent and entrenched underclass. Too many Australians are being deprived of the dignity of work,” said Mr Rozner.

Watch the IPA’s latest video on [Men Without Work](#). [Download the full report here](#)

## Men care too.. Greg Smith

When the mower won't start or a tap is leaking we can change the spark plug or washer and everything works like it should, job done, simple. Men are problem solvers we like to fix things so when we come across something that can't be fixed it can put us in a tough situation. What isn't simple is when someone we love and care about has a disability or is unwell and needs our help.

The term 'Carer' is used to identify someone who provides unpaid and informal assistance to a 'family member or friend with a disability, mental illness, drug and alcohol dependencies, chronic condition, terminal illness or who is frail'. Time spent caring can vary from a few hours a week up to a 24/7 commitment for someone needing constant monitoring and support.

2016 Census data released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics revealed that in the week prior to census night **849,289** men (15 years and over) provided unpaid assistance to a person with a disability which equates to around **40%** of carers in Australia. In June of 2015, Deloitte Economics estimated the replacement value of the informal work that unpaid carers perform at **\$60.3 Billion**. There are also an unknown number of carers who don't acknowledge or identify with the term carer. Men and boys who fall into this category, known as 'hidden carers', often miss out on social and financial support that can make a difference.

Managing the care of a loved one is challenging, both men and women in caring roles often report low levels of well-being and social isolation. Men often find it difficult to ask employers for flexible working hours and sometimes end up having to leave work altogether to focus on their caring responsibilities. Whilst there are many men in caring roles, there is little research on the subject and at community services level, very few providers actively engage male carers with specific or appropriate programs and activities.

This year Australia will host the 7<sup>th</sup> International Carers Conference in Adelaide from 4-6 October where experts, policy makers, business, community advocates and innovators will discuss opportunities, challenges and partnerships to better support carers in the future. The afternoon session on Day 1 of the conference will see presentations focused on male carers highlighting emotional well-being, peer support and the need to explore strategies for improved research and engagement with men in caring roles. Read more about the conference and book tickets through [Carers Australia](#) website.

Also this October you can help celebrate and acknowledge the men and boys in your community who are in caring roles by hosting an event for [Carers Week](#) between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. There are many events held during Carers Week with only a handful that are aimed at men and boys who care so there is an opportunity now to make a difference, to show your local community that Men Care Too.

Greg Smith is a Carer, Vice President of Candles Cancer Support Group Inc and Carer Advocate who is presenting at the Int'l Carers Conference in Adelaide on Oct 4<sup>th</sup>. You can find Greg on twitter [@mencareCC](#) or get in touch via email [candles.greg@gmail.com](mailto:candles.greg@gmail.com)

**CARE** FOR A  
**CARER**



Show a carer you care  
during **Carers Week**  
15-22 October 2017

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## Men and women react differently to depression

**Depression is more common in women but men commit suicide more often  
Male and female brains respond differently to negative stimuli, a study found  
The findings could lead to drug treatments for depression for each gender**

The brains of men and women react very differently to **depression** – and this may mean that each sex should receive different drug treatments, research suggests. Depression is twice as common in women than men but men are more likely to take their own lives.

Now in a study of depressed teenagers and young adults, researchers have found that male and female brains of depressed patients respond differently to negative stimuli. The findings, it is hoped, could lead to drug treatments for depression that recognise the difference in reaction between boys' and girls' brains. The University of Cambridge study said that by the age of 15, girls are twice as likely to suffer from serious depression as boys. The greater incidence of depression in women has been linked to body image issues, hormone fluctuations and even genetics – with research showing girls are more likely to inherit the condition. Now in a study of depressed teenagers and young adults, researchers have found that male and female brains of depressed patients respond differently to negative stimuli.

Girls are also more likely to have 'negative thinking styles' – a tendency to ruminate on bad things on their lives. But while major depression is more common in girls, boys are more likely to commit suicide or resort to substance abuse than girls, the researchers said. University of Cambridge researcher Jie-Yu Chuang, said of the research published in *Frontiers in Psychiatry*: 'Men are more liable to suffer from persistent depression, whereas in women depression tends to be more episodic. Mr Chuang said of the results: 'Our finding suggests that early in adolescence, depression might affect the brain differently between boys and girls,' explains Chuang. 'Sex-specific treatment and prevention strategies for depression should be considered early in adolescence. Hopefully, these early interventions could alter the disease trajectory before things get worse.'



Last year a Department for Education study of 14 year olds found 37 per cent of girls reported feeling unhappy, worthless or unable to concentrate, more than twice the percentage of boys, 15 per cent, reporting the same feelings. The figure for girls had risen four percentage points since 2005, while the figure for boys has slightly fallen. Depression in women has been studied more than in men as it is more common the researchers said. In their study, they conducted brain scans on 82 female and 24 male patients suffering depression and 24 female and 10 male healthy volunteers, aged between 11 and 18. The researchers imaged the adolescents' brains using magnetic resonance imaging, while flashing happy, sad or neutral words on a screen in a specific order. The volunteers pressed a button when certain types of words appeared and did not press the button when others appeared, and the researchers measured their brain activity throughout the experiment.

When the researchers flashed certain combinations of words on the screen, they noticed that depression affects brain activity differently between boys and girls in brain regions such as the supramarginal gyrus and posterior cingulate. For instance the supermarginal gyrus of men showed 'higher activation' in response to negative words, and lower activation in response to positive words compared with women.

Source: Colin Fernandez Science Correspondent For The Daily Mail

## Is Technology Making People Less Sociable?

With the spread of mobile technology, it's become much easier for more people to maintain constant contact with their social networks online. And a lot of people are taking advantage of that opportunity. One indication: A recent Pew Research survey of adults in the U.S. found that 71% use Facebook at least occasionally, and 45% of Facebook users check the site several times a day. That sounds like people are becoming more sociable. But some people think the opposite is happening. The problem, they say, is that we spend so much time maintaining superficial connections online that we aren't dedicating enough time or effort to cultivating deeper real-life relationships. Too much chatter, too little real conversation.

Others counter that online social networks supplement face-to-face sociability, they don't replace it. These people argue that we can expand our social horizons online, deepening our connections to the world around us, and at the same time take advantage of technology to make our closest relationships even closer. Larry Rosen, a professor of psychology at California State University, Dominguez Hills, says technology is distracting us from our real-world relationships.

So that I won't be branded a Luddite, I will start by saying that I have embraced technology in my life and in my 40 years of teaching. I talk to parents about responsible technology use and educators about enhancing its classroom efficacy. As a research psychologist, I have studied the impact of technology for 30 years among 50,000 children, teens and adults in the U.S. and 24 other countries. In that time, three major game-changers have entered our world: portable computers, social communication and smartphones. The total effect has been to allow us to connect more with the people in our virtual world—but communicate less with those who are in our real world.



Our real and virtual worlds certainly overlap, as many of our virtual friends are also our real friends. But the time and effort we put into our virtual worlds limit the time to connect and especially to communicate on a deeper level in our real world. With smartphone in hand, we face a constant barrage of alerts, notifications, vibrations and beeps warning us that something seemingly important has happened and we must pay attention. We tap out brief missives and believe that we are being sociable, but as psychologist Sherry Turkle has so aptly said, we are only getting “sips” of connection, not real communication. Worse, we don't even need a beep or vibration to distract us anymore. In one study of more than 1,100 teens and adults, my fellow researchers and I found that the vast majority of smartphone users under 35 checked in with their electronic devices many times a day and mostly without receiving an external alert. **Anxiety drives this behaviour.** As evidenced by a rash of phantom pocket vibrations, our constant need to check comes from anxiety about needing to know what is happening in our virtual worlds. In one study, we monitored anxiety levels of smartphone users when we wouldn't let them use their phones, and found that the heavy smartphone users showed increased anxiety after only 10 minutes and that anxiety continued to increase across the hour long study. Moderate users showed some anxiety, while light users showed none. If we are constantly checking in with our virtual worlds, this leaves little time for our real-world relationships.

A second issue is the difference between connecting and communicating. While we may have hundreds of Facebook friends—people we never would have met otherwise, with whom we can share many new things—do they really provide the kind of human interaction that is so essential to our emotional health? Psychologists define social capital, or the benefit we derive from social interactions, in two ways: bonding and the more superficial bridging. **Research shows that virtual-world friends provide mostly bridging social capital, while real-world friends provide bonding social capital.** For instance, in one study we found that while empathy can be dispensed in the virtual world, it is only one-sixth as effective in making the recipient feel socially supported compared with empathy proffered in the real world.

**A hug feels six times more supportive than an emoji.** We need to examine our technology use to ensure that it isn't getting in the way of our being sociable and getting the emotional support we need from the people who are closest to us. We need to put our phones away in social settings and consider making phone calls when we want to contact people instead of a series of brief texts. We need to learn to check in less often and seek out face-to-face contact more often.

## Why men won't take 'female' jobs..

A registered nurse hangs an I.V. bag for a patient at the University of Miami Hospital's Emergency Department. These days, jobs are plentiful, but good jobs — the ones that offer benefits and protection from income volatility — are scarce. The trouble is that a lot of the good ones are in traditionally female, or what are often referred to as "pink-collar," professions. And it's not just that some men don't want to be nurses. According to some experts, their wives don't want them to be nurses either.

Nursing as a field remains about 90 percent female, and the American Nursing Association sees only "modest progress" when it comes to diversity. An analysis in the New York Times suggests that might be because old-fashioned gender roles can matter as much to women as to men. Ofer Sharone, an assistant professor of sociology at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, has studied middle-aged white-collar professionals who have lost their jobs. He found that some men who might have been willing to consider lower-paid jobs in typically feminine fields encountered resistance from their wives, who urged them to keep looking.

Sharone tells the Times that work, especially the masculine kind, is central to male identity. "What does it mean for a man to take a low-paying job that's typically associated with women? What kind of price will they pay with their friends, their lives, their wives, compared to unemployment?"



With the right inducements, though, couples could come around. Right now, the highest-paying jobs in each state are in health care. "In every state, the highest annual wage belongs to professions in the health care sector, even states that are more remote," according to financial data visualization site Howmuch.net. Most of those positions are MDs, but other positions in medicine pay well too.

Physician assistants, nurse practitioners and anaesthesiologist assistants are just a few in-demand jobs that pay over \$90,000. Nurse anaesthetists, or CRNAs, make six figures. And those numbers seem to sway men. When they do gravitate to the field, they often choose that sub-specialty, according to the ANA: "Over the entire set of CRNAs, the male share was 42.8 percent, compared to the 7.4 percent of NPs/CNMs who were male." Male CRNAs even make more, on average, than female ones: "Male nurse anaesthetists averaged \$171,700 per year, while their female counterparts averaged \$160,680 a year," reports the Houston Chronicle.

With high enough pay, worries about traditional gender roles seem to subside. And ultimately, it seems like the money is the real issue. Many pink-collar professions don't pay well enough to attract men. Indeed, that might be intentional, Janette S. Dill, an assistant professor of sociology at the University of Akron, suggests to the Times: "I sometimes wonder if health organizations don't want men to come into these jobs because they'll demand higher wages," Professor Dill said. "They're happy to have a work force of women they can pay \$8 or \$9 an hour." Another expert agrees, saying that, right now, many female workers are being exploited: "Pink-collar jobs are crap jobs for anyone," said Joan C. Williams, a professor at the University of California Hastings College of the Law. "We need to reinvent pink-collar jobs so men will take them and won't be unhappy — or women, either."

Source: Ester Bloom Senior Editor, CNBC

## NATIONAL MALE SUICIDE PREVENTION CONFERENCE



### NEW PRE-CONFERENCE EVENT

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Male Suicide  
Prevention Seminar

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> November

Seminar Sponsored by AMHF



## NATIONAL MALE SUICIDE PREVENTION CONFERENCE

**“TOGETHER WE CAN STOP MALE SUICIDE”**

Wednesday 9th & Thursday 10th November

Holiday Inn, 18-40 Anderson St, Parramatta NSW

[For an update list of speakers visit the website](#)

### BOOK TICKETS TODAY

Tickets to the conference are available via [Men's Health Services](#).

[Link to Registration Form](#)

ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER MALE SUICIDE PREVENTION  
SEMINAR Wednesday 8th November \$100

Early Bird (Before 30th September): \$447 for both days or \$224 per day

Full Price (from 1st October onwards): \$497 for both days or \$250 per day

Contact Glen Poole at [StopMaleSuicide@gmail.com](mailto:StopMaleSuicide@gmail.com)

## More men in Singapore reaping benefits of yoga



Nervous about being watched by a roomful of women, they had to be dragged to yoga practice by their wives, but once they stepped in, they could not be dragged back out. The leg cramps suffered by Mr Andy Teo while running marathons went away, while Mr Alex Lau was able to quit smoking - all because of this mind-body practice. They are among the increasing number of men in Singapore who are turning to yoga for health and fitness, although it is a realm still mainly inhabited by women.

"My legs used to cramp easily during long-distance running, and I didn't know why," said Mr Teo, 48, a retired infrastructure specialist. Four years ago, his wife persuaded him to join her at a yoga class while they were living in Japan (they are now back in Singapore). "Before taking up yoga, I had been using only my leg muscles to run, which put them under great strain," said Mr Teo. "In yoga, I did things like leg raises that built up my core muscles. Now I don't use just leg muscles but also my core muscles to run." He no longer suffers from cramps, and just one hour of yoga a week is enough to keep them away.

There were other benefits. Yoga helped the 1.8m-tall man stop hunching and to stand straight, and it strengthened his shoulder joints, which were prone to dislocation. Eventually, he recommended it to a fellow runner, who later thanked him for the suggestion. He no longer has any qualms about being the only man among 10 women in his yoga class. Nor does Mr Lau, who also felt a little awkward at his first yoga class half a year ago. He was the only man there, but at least he had his wife by his side to encourage him. "It is very strenuous although it is just one hour, and you sweat a lot," said the 43-year-old civil servant.

Both Mr Teo and Mr Lau are students of Mr Dev Kapil, 33, director of One Wellness Fitness Club, who estimates that in the early 2000s, only 2 per cent of yoga practitioners in Singapore were men, based on information shared among his network of yoga teachers. Today, male enrolment in yoga at his club stands at about 25 per cent. Mr Dev attributes the increase to research done over the years that has raised awareness about the benefits of yoga, such as relieving stress and improving sleep, blood circulation, bone health and the respiratory system.

Mr Mohankumar Rajaraman, an instructor at True Yoga, where 14 per cent of yoga classes are made up of men, said there is nevertheless still a perception among many men that yoga is "too easy" to enable them to attain their fitness goals. "Yoga is also depicted in popular media as something that is only for women," he added. "Socially, in a fitness-centre setting, men find it more rewarding to display their muscles among their gym peers via weightlifting and functional and strength training versus in a yoga-class setting," said Mr Mohankumar.

## Short Takes

### 2017 Institute of Group Leaders' Conference Thursday and Friday, 12-13 October 2017 Wesley Conference Centre - 220 Pitt St, Sydney

Compassion - Communication - Connection - Capturing learning: Challenges in a Changing World  
[Click here for a copy of the IGL 2017 Conference flier](#)

### Cabot's 7th National Men's Shed Conference Onwards & Upwards Share Talk Discover29 September - 1 October 2017 | Mantra on View Hotel, Surfers Paradise

The program includes something for everyone. Interactive Conference sessions will encourage delegates to come together to share their lessons, talk in depth about experiences and discover ways to grow the success of their shed. It is certainly not just a program for Shed Leaders, we encourage all Shedders to attend! Visit the conference website [here](#)

### IAHA National Conference 27-29 November 2017, Perth, Western Australia

Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA), a national not for profit, member-based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander allied health organisation, will hold its 2017 IAHA National Conference at the Rendezvous Scarborough Perth in Western Australia. The conference theme is Care, Cultures and Connection, which reflects three key factors that influence the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Within an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and allied health context, building culturally responsive connections and relationships and valuing cultures, cultural knowledges and perspectives will contribute to the delivery of culturally safe and responsive care. [Read more >](#)

### get in early program

Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network in conjunction with Men's Health SERVICES will be running a number of FREE **get in early** men's health education sessions in the Penrith and Hawkesbury areas running **October 30 – November 3 (Penrith) and November 20 -24 (Hawkesbury)**. The sessions run from one to one and a half hours and often cover other men's health issues that the men attended would like to talk about. If you would like a FREE **get in early** session for your group, service, organisation, sporting club or Men's Shed just contact Greg Millan on 0417 772 390 or email [greg@menshealthservices.com.au](mailto:greg@menshealthservices.com.au) for information on how to make a booking. **get in early** [website](#)

### Doctors on the cusp of launching the first male contraceptive.

Despite a survey from 2000 that found 83 percent of men from various countries would take a contraceptive, pharmaceutical companies seem reluctant to pursue a male contraceptive beyond what is already on the market. Experts say a male birth control method could cut into the thriving global markets for female contraceptives and condoms, valued at \$10 billion and \$3.2 billion each year, respectively. Without backing from big pharma, some small companies are receiving grants from large public health organizations, such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which in 2016 donated \$600,000 for the development of male contraceptives. Read more [here](#).

### Age of men, not just women, affects IVF success

New research suggests that like women, a man's age also has an effect on the success of IVF treatment, despite the appearance of male fertility as never-ending. Unlike women, men do not go through menopause or a predictable and detectable decline in fertility, however a few previous studies have found that a man's age can affect natural conception, particularly in the genetic health of sperm cells. However, a woman's age is often thought to be the dominant factor in the success of both.

They also noted that a man's age appears to play a role in natural conception, with increasing male age associated with decreased incidence of pregnancy, increased time to pregnancy, and increased risk of miscarriage. Although it is unsure why age has this effect, some possible explanations include increased DNA damage in sperm, and epigenetic alterations in sperm that affect fertilization, implantation, or embryo development.