

A Call for *American Journal of Men's Health*

Demetrius J. Porche, DNS, APRN



It is with great pleasure and anticipation that we introduce the inaugural issue of *American Journal of Men's Health* (AJMH). AJMH has the potential to address health issues of nearly half of the American population. The 2000 U.S. census identified that males represented 137,916,186

or 49% of the American population (Spraggins, 2005). The journal will address the diverse health needs of the American male population from a multidisciplinary perspective. The inauguration of a new journal focusing on men's health poses a least three critical questions that need to be answered: What is men's health? Why is AJMH needed? What is the focus of the journal, and how is it different from other journals?

What Is Men's Health?

There are no clear and consistent definitions of what constitutes men's health. Consistent and unchallenged themes directly associated with men's health are the health alterations related to the biological and physiologically differentiating aspects of the male sex. Specifically, these health alterations affect the penis, prostate, testicles, and other anatomical structures associated with the male reproductive tract. However, this does not present a holistic or comprehensive perspective of men's health. Men's health is more than the mere biological or physiological determinants of the male sex. International definitions have provided some insight into the defining boundaries of the men's health field.

Cultural paradigms from the international community strongly influence what is considered men's health. The Australian Men's Health Network defines men's health as conditions or diseases that

are unique to men, that are more prevalent in men, that are more serious among men, for which risk factors are different for men, or for which different interventions are required for men (Fletcher, 1997). Similarly yet differently, Men's Health Forum of England describes a male health issue as one that arises from physiological, psychological, social, or environmental factors that have a specific impact on boys or men and/or in which interventions are required to achieve health improvements in the health and well-being at either the individual or population level (Men's Health Forum, 2004; White, 2004).

I have proposed defining men's health as a holistic and comprehensive approach that addresses the physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual life experiences and needs of men throughout their life spans (Porche & Willis, 2004). Inclusive is the recognition that a man's health is affected not only by the physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual aspects of his life but also by the context in which he lives. Therefore, we must recognize the impact of the family, community, society, institutions, and environment. It is imperative that we discern that men's health expands beyond the biological paradigm of the pelvis.

Why Is AJMH Needed?

The disparate health issues affecting men call for AJMH. The latest mortality data from 2003 identify that the age-adjusted death rate for men was 41% greater than for women. In addition, the life expectancy for men is about 5.3 years less than for women (Hoyert, Heron, Murphy, & Kung, 2006). The leading causes of death in men are heart disease, cancer, unintentional injuries, stroke, chronic lower respiratory diseases, diabetes, influenza and pneumonia, suicide, kidney disease, and chronic liver disease (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2006).

Significant male morbidity data were generated from the National Health Interview Survey conducted in 2004 by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services ([USDHHS] 2006). Nine percent of the male population reported feeling sadness, hopelessness, worthlessness, or that everything was an effort in the previous 30 days. In addition, 13% of the men surveyed reported feeling nervous or restless in the previous 30 days. Twelve percent of the male respondents reported limitations in physical functioning. Physical activity is directly associated with men's health status. Fifty-seven percent of the men reported never engaging in physical activity lasting 10 minutes or more per week. Associated with these data is the fact that 43% of the men surveyed were considered overweight according to body mass index measures (USDHHS, 2006).

Men are generally considered less likely to enter the health care system. Twenty percent of the men surveyed reported not having a regular place to receive health care services, with 26% of the men reporting no physician or other health professional visits in the previous 12 months. In addition, from a morbidity perspective, men experienced an average of 3 bed days because of illness or injury requiring lost workdays (USDHHS, 2006), affecting their employer and personal incomes. These statistics are considered the tip of the iceberg regarding the mortality and morbidity disparities in men's health.

At the present time, there is no one journal that focuses solely on the disparate health issues affecting men's health. *AJMH* provides an opportunity for professionals from multiple disciplines to contribute to and expand the current state of science regarding men's health.

What Is the Focus of *AJMH*, and How Is It Different From Other Journals?

The mission of *AJMH* is to provide a forum through which the multidisciplinary professional community disseminates the scholarly state of science regarding men's health issues focusing on "health" to improve men's health, improve men's quality of life, and reduce disparities. An essential focal point is not merely on disease but the preservation and promotion of health. The primary aim of the journal is to disseminate peer-reviewed empirical research and theoretical information that are emerging in multiple disciplines such as anthropology, sociology,

history, psychology, medicine, nursing, allied health, and public health that significantly affect men's health status. The journal's secondary aim is to create a multidisciplinary network of scholars engaged in various aspects of men's health.

The scope of *AJMH* is to disseminate research and theoretical information within a physical, social, psychological, cultural, political, and historical context that focus on health. I would like *AJMH* to embrace manuscripts that address all determinants of men's health from a biological/physical, social, cultural, psychological, and environmental perspective. The journal scope will originate from multiple, disciplinary-specific phenomena and their impact on the health state of men. Scholarly manuscripts should address the phenomenon's impact on health.

It is expected that *AJMH* will evolve to be a core resource for cutting-edge information regarding men's health and illness from a basic science to a translational science perspective. A differentiating aspect of the journal is the strong focus on health and addressing a breadth of phenomena that affect the determinants of men's health and address disparate health issues. Another distinguishing aspect of *AJMH* is the interdisciplinary science that will be disseminated, all focusing on men's health. *AJMH* will serve as the journal that builds a body of knowledge on men's health issues that extends from the research laboratory environment to the practice setting.

It is my desire to partner with outstanding educators, clinicians, and researchers/scientists to develop an excellent men's health journal. Please consider *AJMH* as your forum to access and disseminate scholarly information regarding men's health.

References

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2006). *Leading causes of death: Males—United States, 2002*. Retrieved September 19, 2006, from <http://www.cdc.gov/men/Icod.htm>
- Fletcher, R. (1997). *Report on men's health services*. Newcastle, Australia: University of Newcastle.
- Hoyert, D. L., Heron, M. P., Murphy, S. L., & Kung, H. (2006). *Deaths: Final data for 2003*. Retrieved September 22, 2006, from <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/pubs/pubd/hestats/finaldeaths03/finaldeaths03.htm>
- Men's Health Forum, (2004). *Getting it sorted*. Retrieved September 19, 2006, from www.menshealthforum.org.uk

- Porche, D. J., & Willis, D. G. (2004). Nursing and men's health movement: Considerations for the 21st century. *Nursing Clinics of North America*, 39(2), 251-258.
- Spraggins, R. E. (2005). *We the people: Women and men in the United States. Census 2000 special reports*. Retrieved September 22, 2006, from <http://www.census.gov/prod/2005pubs/censr-20.pdf#search=%22We%20the%20people%3A%20Women%20and%20men%20in%20the%20United%20States%3A%20Census%202000%20special%20reports%22>
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2006). *Summary health statistics for U.S. adults: National Health Interview Survey, 2004*. Washington, DC: Author.
- White, A. (2004). Men's health: The challenges ahead. *Journal of Men's Health and Gender*, 1(4), 296-299.