

# A guide for managers: Understanding men's health challenges in the workplace



## Understanding men's health challenges in the workplace 03

## What do we mean by 'men's health' 07

## How men's health challenges can impact someone at work 11

## How to support your team through men's health challenges 13

### A note about language

At Fertifa, we use the terms “man” or “men” to refer to those who were assigned-male-at-birth (AMAB). We understand that not everyone who is AMAB identifies as a man or as any gender. We're here for anyone who identifies as a man, woman, gender non-binary, gender non-specific or anyone who defines themselves, their gender, their sexuality in any way we've not mentioned. We want to make our content as inclusive as possible, but we're learning all of the time. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you feel that we can make our content, our language or generally anything at Fertifa more inclusive and representative of you.



# Understanding men's health in the workplace, and beyond

# About 1 in 8 men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer. But studies have shown that 75% of men in the UK will put off going to the doctor, even when feeling ill.

Men's health can be a complex topic to address in the workplace. Many of the health issues that men experience most regularly can be sensitive, highly personal and potentially difficult to acknowledge or speak about. For some employees, barriers to requesting or accessing support are also established by concerns about the negative impact their condition might have on their careers.

Further challenges are presented by the fact that when it comes to taking care of their health, men can often be reluctant to seek help. Working-age men are far less likely to visit a GP than women when they become ill, and they are less likely to ask for help with their mental health.

Nonetheless, it's critical that employers and managers take the time and dedicate the necessary resource to shaping a professional environment in which men feel they can share their experiences, ask for help and access the support they need to protect their health and wellbeing.



# Men account for three quarters of premature deaths from heart disease, are twice as likely to die from drug or alcohol abuse and three times more likely to die from suicide.

These numbers are too big to ignore. Men can face a spectrum of reproductive health concerns that are specific to the male sex organs, and in addition to this, lots of other health conditions affect men at a higher rate than women and are harder to manage in men. All employees deserve to be treated with dignity and respect, and to feel that the people they work with prioritise their health.

People who are safe and healthy in their professional environment are also more likely to feel happy and motivated to deliver high quality work.

If your company has already considered how to raise awareness about men's health issues and how men's health can be effectively promoted and supported, that's important progress. If this is not an area you've considered in detail just yet and you're unclear on where to start, that's entirely understandable too.





## Themes of this kind can be difficult to navigate from a professional perspective, especially if you haven't experienced men's health issues yourself.

This guide will help you understand what men's health problems are and the conditions they can entail, why they might impact how someone feels and functions professionally.

We'll also cover why it's important to engage with these challenges in the workplace and what you as a manager can do to support your colleagues through these experiences.

If someone in your team is struggling with men's health issues, reach out to see if they need support. Don't forget, we're here to help too

If you're interested in implementing men's health support for your team, get in touch at [enquiries@fertifa.com](mailto:enquiries@fertifa.com). We offer everything from sperm testing to erectile dysfunction solutions to prostate cancer screening. We make sure people are supported, every step of their journey and more.



# What do we actually mean by 'men's health'

# The phrase 'men's health' is normally used to cover the physical and mental health challenges that are of a particular concern for men

There are a number of health issues and healthcare needs that people assigned male at birth are likely to experience.

This will differ from those encountered by people assigned female at birth.

Key distinctions in cis reproductive systems make different sexes vulnerable to different conditions (and therefore create alternative health requirements for men).

There is also an important spectrum of other factors, both biological and social.

This mean men's health needs specific kinds of attention to help support men's wellbeing, especially in the workplace.

The most common men's health challenges are: testicular cancer, prostate cancer, penile cancer, erectile dysfunction, infertility, testosterone deficiency, sexually transmitted diseases and peyronie's disease.

We have articles and guides around each of these topics (written by our clinical team), that can be found on our Education Hub in the Fertifa app.



## 20% of men

will die before the age of 65, meaning one in five male staff will die before they're old enough to retire.

National Institute for Health



# Key facts and figures in men's health

- An estimated 7% of all men are affected by infertility.
- In around half of male infertility cases, the cause is unexplained.
- Generally, 30% of fertility issues are due to the man, 30% are due to the woman and 30-40% are due to both or unknown reasons.
- 20% of men die before the age of 65, meaning one in five male staff will die before they're old enough to retire.
- At any given age, men are twice as likely to die of COVID-19 as women.
- 75% of premature deaths from coronary heart disease are male.
- Men tend to develop coronary heart disease 10-15 years earlier than women.
- Men have a 37% higher risk of dying from cancer and a 67% higher chance of dying from cancers that affect both men and women.
- 143 men are diagnosed with prostate cancer every year in the UK, and around 475,000 men are living with and after prostate cancer.



**7% of men**  
are affected by infertility. In around half  
of male infertility cases, the cause is  
unexplained.

Office for National Statistics

## Key facts and figures in men's health

- 99% of all men diagnosed with testicular cancer survive for a year or more after diagnosis, and 98% survive for five years or more.
- Two thirds of men in the UK are overweight.
- Middle-aged men are twice as likely as women to have diabetes and twice as likely not to know.
- Suicide is the leading cause of death in men under 50 and there has been an increase among men aged 35-64.
- Men are nearly three times more likely than women to become alcohol dependent.
- Men in the UK report significantly lower life satisfaction than women.
- Data suggests that half of all men between 40 and 70 years old will experience erectile dysfunction at one time or to some degree.



# 52% of men

suffer from erectile dysfunction at  
some point in their lives.

National Institute for Health

# How men's health challenges can impact someone at work

# How can men's health challenges impact someone at work (and beyond)



Many men believe they should hide signs that they are struggling from their employers.

For some men there is a pervasive sense that, if they are seen to be challenged by their health or personal relationships, their career will be in danger.

This makes it harder for them to speak out about their experiences. Men's health issues can of course make it very difficult to enjoy a productive and stimulating work life.

Depending on the kind of company in which you work, it may be that the nature of a men's health condition compromises their ability to perform certain elements of the job until they are properly supported with treatment and adjustments to their environment.



Or it may be that stress, anxiety and other mental health conditions that are created or intensified by the experience of confronting and managing a physical health condition make it hard to concentrate and engage effectively at work.

Either way, it's critical that an open, supportive professional environment is shaped so that men feel comfortable and confident about sharing the health issues they are facing.

Only then will it be possible to provide the support necessary to ensure the kind of long-term wellbeing that will allow men to make their fullest contribution in the workplace.

As a manager, it's your responsibility to make someone going through any sort of health challenge feel supported and well looked after.

# Supporting your team through men's health challenges



# How can you support someone in your team?



Ensure you have up-to-date Equality and Diversity policies that include robust and a flexible provision for men's health concerns of all kinds.



Encourage members of staff to make and attend medical appointments by clarifying the availability of flexible hours to accommodate these priorities, especially emphasising that it is acceptable to attend doctors appointments etc. within working hours.



Think about nominating a men's health lead or 'champion' at work who can help build awareness of men's health issues, generate dialogue to encourage openness, gather feedback, identify gaps in support and improve uptake of help across teams.



Work with senior employees to help them share their own experiences of accessing support and dealing with health issues, especially in relation to mental health.



Mark relevant awareness days in shared calendars – plan informal events and develop resources for these dates to maximise their impact for educating and supporting colleagues. Potential days could include: Movember and Men's Health Week.



Make sure your employees know where to find trustworthy and detailed sources of information about male health. Consider creating an Employee Assistance Programme or a dedicated space on the intranet where resources and useful links are provided.

# How can you support someone in your team?

If a team member approaches you to let you know they have a health issue or concern, it's crucial that you listen to what they are going through, treat their concerns with sensitivity and equip yourself to direct them to adequate support.



## Ask them how best you can support them

People facing any health challenge will need different levels of support from their work and manager. Try not to make assumptions about what they might need during this time, as everyone will approach health concerns differently. It's always best to ask them what you can do, if anything, to support them and then do your best to put these accommodations in place.



## Keep the conversation ongoing and open

Make sure you check in to see how they are and make sure your team member knows if they need additional support, or different types of support, they can always ask for it. There is no need to ask for specifics or pry for details but asking something like 'how are you doing?' will open up the conversation and let your team member know you are there for them if they need.



## Keep everything confidential

Respect your team members' privacy and keep anything they share with you confidential. It's up to them to decide if they'd like to let others know. It may be helpful checking in with them to see if they would like you, or someone from HR, to tell the wider team what they're going through. But remember, this is an individual's choice and everyone will be different.



## Know your company policy

Familiarise yourself with your company's health and wellbeing policies, so if somebody does come to you with any specific health issues you know what support your company offers, and so you can signpost them to their right health and wellbeing providers.

## Let's talk about the sensitive stuff.

1 in 8 men in the UK will be diagnosed with prostate cancer. Reproductive health issues can impact anyone, no matter how much we may try to ignore them or pretend something is nothing.



### We understand your journey.

Reproductive health issues can impact anyone, no matter how much we may try to ignore them or pretend something is nothing. It's time to remove the stigma around men's reproductive health and normalise taking care of ourselves in the best way possible. Fertifa is a helping hand for people experiencing all kinds of reproductive health concerns.



### We give expert, confidential support.

For everything from sperm testing to sperm freezing to erectile dysfunction to prostate or testicular cancer and Peyronie's disease. Everyone's hormonal health journey is unique. We make sure you're supported regardless of race, age, sexual orientation, sex, gender identity or relationship status.



#### Professor Asif Muneer

Men's health specialist

Professor Asif Muneer is one of our men's health advisors and an expert in the field of andrology. This includes the management of male diseases including erectile dysfunction, Peyronie's disease and male infertility.

[Find out more](#) ↗

His specialist interests include male genital cancers, male infertility, erectile dysfunction, penile prosthesis surgery, vasectomy reversal, surgical sperm retrieval and Peyronie's disease. Our clinical team can give expert and confidential advice on everything from sperm testing and freezing to prostate and testicular cancer detection. We're here to help, for all the most sensitive health concerns.



#### A doctor-led programme

In-house specialists to provide employer-funded consultations, diagnostics and treatment to your employees.



#### Wellbeing specialists

Nutritional experts and emotional therapists on-hand to reduce stress and support with symptom management.



#### A suite of education

HR policy support, lunch & learn sessions, workshops, webinars and podcasts – accessible for all Fertifa members.



#### Tech-enabled solutions

Online appointment booking, video consultations, at-home finger-prick blood tests and drug delivery as standard.

Get in touch with us  
at [enquiries@fertifa.com](mailto:enquiries@fertifa.com) if you have  
any questions.

