



**MEN
ARE MORE
RELUCTANT TO GO TO
THE DOCTOR
AND IT'S PUTTING THEM
AT RISK**

by Diana Sanchez & Mary Hummelstein

Men more reluctant to go to the doctor – and it's putting them at risk

As a bloke you may feel well and full of beans on the outside, however some men are not aware of what's happening on the inside. Please take a moment to read this article, it may save your life.....

The Conversation

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Men can expect to die approximately five years sooner than women, and men are more likely to die as a result of unintentional injury and suicide relative to women.

These differences are not well explained by physiological differences between men and women. One possible explanation is that men are more reluctant to go to the doctor – and less likely to be honest once they get there.

We have a cultural script about masculinity that tells men they need to be tough, brave, strong and self-reliant. It's exemplified in phrases like "be a man" and "man up". Men learn from an early age if they don't act in this tough, masculine way they lose their status and respect as men.

There is literature linking masculinity to health issues in men.

(<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0277953699003901>)

Our recent study found men who buy into the traditional cultural script about masculinity and believe they must be brave and self-reliant in order to be respected, had more barriers to seeking care compared to those who did not endorse these beliefs.

Men endorsing these beliefs about masculinity and enacting them in their own lives were less likely to seek preventative care. And they were more likely to delay care when they experienced injury or illness.

Essentially, we found masculinity was related to delays in health care-seeking.

Men endorsing masculinity beliefs tend to delay preventative care and, when they do go to the doctor, they prefer male doctors even though they may feel more comfortable with females.

Care avoidance and impaired doctor-patient communication could have a very large impact on men's health. If men aren't honest with their doctors about their symptoms they might not receive adequate treatment. If they don't seek preventive care (such as regular check-ups) they may miss early indicators of heart disease, cancer or other serious health problems.

These findings highlight the importance of choosing a doctor with whom patients feel comfortable, regardless of gender (doctor or patient). It's really important to encourage men to be totally honest with their doctor and to remember that doctors are bound by confidentiality. That is, they won't discuss an individual patient with anyone else.

Men should think about doctor's clinics as safe, judgment-free places.

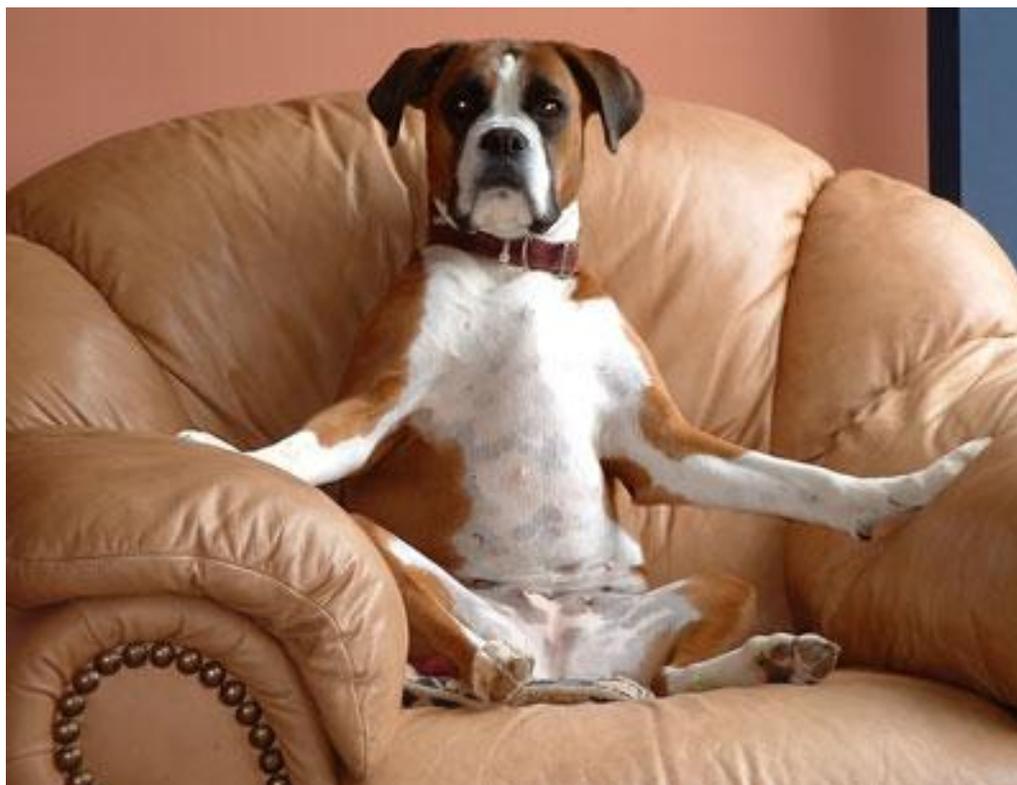
Individuals go to doctors to take care of their bodies – we should think of that as embodying a strength not a weakness.

Ignoring symptoms and avoiding the doctor only ends up hurting the individual in the long run.

Authors

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“So, if I can front up for a check-up so can you”



It will be no surprise to you that at Francis Family Doctor's our client demographic is generally older than 50 years of age. Some have long-term physical conditions or challenges coping day-to-day, things that may've been prevented or treated if actions were taken earlier to prevent long term illness.

Simple things like ways to manage everyday stresses and lifestyle changes can be discussed with your family doctor, who can refer you to other support services if required. Even the healthiest of men can be vulnerable to major sudden illness.

How about making a time for a full medical check-up?

Online bookings are available at -

www.francisfamilydoctors.com/bookonline

or call us on 4197 1567.

The team are waiting to support our local guys!