


Fostering Transnational Research Partnerships to Advance Men's Health

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Research relating to boys' and men's health has been happening in various forms, across multiple disciplines, for decades. Biomedical research on sex-specific men's health issues has been a dominant feature of this discourse, as have epidemiological and psychological studies that have used sex-disaggregated data to convey disproportionate risks noted among boys and men in relation to a broad range of physical and mental health issues. This century has seen a rapid growth in social scientific scholarship emerging from gender studies, sociology, anthropology and public health disciplines that has offered new insights into a broader array of men's health issues examining social, cultural, political, and economic determinants of health. This transition has seen an increased focus on multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research approaches, particularly in relation to addressing inequities in men's health.

There are multiple benefits arising from this broader men's health research landscape. It has provided opportunities to

- Use an intersectional lens to examine the complex relationships between age, race, sexuality, geography, disability and socioeconomic status
- Adopt life course approaches focused on the gendered transitions boys and men make throughout their lives
- Strengthen the evidence base available to inform men's health policy and practice contexts
- Establish and sustain more diverse collaborations, partnerships and networks across a wider range of sectors and settings
- Grow a larger and more diverse academic community of men's health scholars, including multiple centres for men's health research

These men's health research achievements are clearly having an impact at local, state/provincial and (some)

national levels. The global impacts are less prominent, but there is significant potential for this to change.

While there is evidence of international collaboration between prominent men's health scholars – generally depicted through co-authorship on academic papers, book chapters, and commissioned reports – there is minimal momentum towards the development of a truly transnational men's health research program. With the exception of some cross-country research partnerships in Europe – and a handful of the same between the United States, United Kingdom, Ireland, Canada and Australia – most global men's health collaborations have been driven by passionate individuals with like-minded research interests. These relationships have been fostered through international conferences; the compilation of men's health special issues for academic journals; and overseas sabbaticals, study tours and visiting fellowships. As an example, international conferences, and the lead author's current participation in a U.S.-based Fulbright Senior Scholar Award in the United States, have allowed us to meet face-to-face to discuss a range of research priorities and mutual areas of interest relating to equity and men's health in Australia and the United States. These experiences have been critical in formulating research relationships, sharing and learning information about new and emerging research findings in each of our respective jurisdictions, discussing methodological

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and analytical challenges and opportunities and stimulating new ideas and grant opportunities – all with an explicit goal of advancing equity in men's health.

These experiences have led us to understand that the global men's health community has expanded and matured into a position where the development and implementation of a transnational men's health research agenda is now within reach. We now have the kind of technology to make this more feasible, and the current COVID-19 pandemic has cemented this reality. One example is the novel and innovative research methods involving online engagement and multiple social media platforms that create new opportunities to traverse country boundaries. We also have a critical mass of men's health scholars entering early and mid-career research phases that can help to shoulder, and shape, this challenge.

With the support of global men's health entities such as Global Action on Men's Health and the International Society of Men's Health, and the participation of respective national organizations, forums and networks in multiple countries, we are better equipped to galvanize a transnational men's health research vision. To ensure success, this will need to be backed by governments, philanthropic organizations, nonprofit organizations and (ethical) industries that share a common goal to advance the health and well-being of boys and men. Building men's health

research capacity and capability in developing countries, where health and social inequities are more pronounced and research infrastructure is scarce, will also be important. The men's health research community is now at a critical juncture that can foster a strategic transnational research agenda. Who is prepared to work with us on this journey?

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