

Men's Health and Well Being: An A-Z Guide

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Longueville Books (2010)

234 pages, ISBN 9781920681586

The past few years have seen a surge in awareness of the health issues affecting men – a group that traditionally does not engage with or actively seek help from health professionals. Part of this reticence is the way in which men have been socialised into being 'strong and silent' masculine archetypes. Such socialisation also fuels and rewards risk-taking behaviour. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare statistics, however, reveal the morbidity and mortality outcomes that may result from such disengagement and risk-taking, and increasingly, there have been several advocacy groups and awareness campaigns that have evolved to meet the health needs of men.

In his timely book, Millan provides an informative, light-hearted and accessible 'a to z' account of an array of health issues affecting men throughout the life-span. The book begins with age-specific health 'checklists' for young adults through to 70 year olds, presenting the types of health issues pertaining to that age group and suggested health-seeking behaviour; e.g. prostate and bowel cancer screening, visual tests for 50 year olds.

Thereafter, health issues are discussed in alphabetical order. Some chapters conclude with a 'resource box' that contains useful websites or contact details for relevant organisations. There are the important diseases that one expects to see presented in a book on men's health – such as depression,

diabetes, prostate and other cancers, and stroke – but key psychosocial issues also feature: body image, alcohol and drug abuse, communication, intimacy and sex, loss and grief, mental health, and smoking are all covered. The book also features several modalities for maintaining health – e.g. acupuncture, meditation, yoga and of course, sport. There is even a chapter on how to approach and communicate with a doctor!

But what really impresses is that the book tackles some of the cultural taboos that challenge the masculine archetype: sexual abuse and assault, sexually transmissible infections, sexuality and suicide are among those presented. This is important because it acknowledges the fact that men do face these issues in real life; seeing these in print may be the only information source a reader might have to better understand what he has experienced and what to do about it.

For such a short work, this book offers a comprehensive overview of the biological, psychosocial and behavioural issues that affect men's health: it is an important Australian resource for all men and for those who want to understand men better.

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