

'Manly men' bounce back better from injury

March 15 2007

For years, experts have said that the strong, silent male is not one to ask for help when he's hurt, and therefore at a disadvantage when it comes to getting better. But new research says this might not be completely accurate. This masculine identity often associated with men in the armed forces and other high-risk occupations may actually encourage and quicken a man's recovery from serious injuries, says a new exploratory study from the University of Missouri-Columbia. The study is the first to quantitatively confirm correlations between masculinity and men's recovery.

The study assessed men's conformity to masculine roles and included a longitudinal component in which their level of improvement in functioning was assessed. It found that men with higher masculinity conformity levels were observed to display greater improvement from initial hospitalization to one year after leaving the hospital.

Though more research is needed, Glenn Good, associate professor of educational, school and counseling psychology in MU College of Education, said the study provides some unexpected findings. Previous studies have generally found that more traditional views of masculinity are barriers toward health and recovery, in that it encourages dangerous activities and discourages men from seeking help with their problems or accepting vulnerability.

"It has long been assumed that men are not as concerned and don't take as good of care of their health," Good said, "but what we're seeing here is that the same ideas that led to their injuries may actually encourage

their recovery."

The tenets of traditional masculinity have been said to include the ability to withstand hardship, 'stick-to-it-iveness' and the willingness to see something through to the end, according to the study.

"The immediate message here is to encourage psychotherapy along with traditional methods of healing," Good said. "Most people with serious injuries are provided primarily biomedical treatments, but it is important to look at psycho-social issues that affect their recovery as well. In terms of a social response, this study encourages us to redefine strength and masculinity in ways that benefit every stage of health care."

This study also can shed some light on what the wounded soldiers from Iraq may be facing," Good said. "The war in Iraq is the first in which such a large number of soldiers are surviving injuries that would once have been fatal, and we as a nation are going to be living with their care for a while."

Source: University of Missouri-Columbia

Citation: 'Manly men' bounce back better from injury (2007, March 15) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2007-03-manly-men-injury.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.