

# Macho stereotypes put off men as well as women

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Some men are being driven away from macho occupations like surgery and the Royal Marines because they don't feel that they are 'man enough', according to new research.

The authors of a study published today in the *British Journal of Psychology* say this means that only individuals who see themselves as macho apply for and stay in such jobs, which helps explain why they remain an incredibly masculine domain.

Although there is much evidence of the negative impact of gendered workplace stereotypes on women, far less attention has been paid to their effect on [men](#). In a two part study of 218 Royal Marine recruits and 117 male surgical trainees, the researchers found that simply being a man isn't enough to protect from the 'corrosive effects' of these macho stereotypes.

Professor Michelle Ryan of the University of Exeter said: "Women have made substantial inroads into some traditionally masculine occupations, but not into others. There is evidence that the latter group of occupations is characterized by the hyper-masculine 'macho' stereotypes that are especially disadvantageous to women. We explored whether these macho occupational stereotypes that are associated with marine commandos and surgeons also discourage men who feel that they 'are not man enough'."

Following the two part study, the researchers found that in new male recruits a perceived 'lack of fit' with masculine commandos was

associated with reduced identification and motivation within their occupation. Furthermore, they discovered that male surgical trainees who didn't feel they fitted in were more likely to want to leave the profession.

Both occupations are either exclusively or predominantly male. Women are currently excluded from the Royal Marines, whilst they make up only around 25 per cent of surgical trainees and 9 per cent of surgical consultants.

But despite the domination of macho stereotypes, the researchers say their findings offer hope for more equality in the future.

Dr Kim Peters of the University of Queensland said: "We've shown that the men who enter into and remain within such occupations will be those who exemplify the occupation's macho stereotypes. Intriguingly, this suggests that increasing the appeal of these [occupations](#) to a more diverse range of men may be one way of increasing their appeal to women."

"Marines, medics and machismo: A lack of fit with masculine occupational stereotypes discourages men's participation" by Kim Peters, Michelle Ryan and Alexander Haslam is published in the *British Journal of Psychology*.

Provided by University of Exeter

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