

# Research spotlights male healthcare attitudes

5 December 2014, by Saskia Angenent

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A researcher at the University of York, studying male attitudes towards self-managing long-term healthcare issues, has discovered that self-management support is better received by men if it does not threaten aspects of masculine identity.

Dr Paul Galdas, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Health Sciences, led the research published in *BMC Public Health*.

Dr Galdas reviewed current research evidence to see whether certain types of support are more appealing and accessible to men with long-term health conditions such as diabetes, heart failure and arthritis.

The study concludes that action-orientated self-management support is preferable to services that are viewed as out-of-keeping with valued aspects of male identity. When certain activities are perceived to challenge masculine ideals associated with independence, stoicism, and control, self-management is less likely to be attractive and appealing to men and they may be less likely than women to take part.

Improving the treatment and management of long-term conditions is one of the most significant challenges facing the NHS. Self-management is a key part of long-term condition care and critical for ensuring that future NHS service delivery remains effective, efficient and sustainable.

Clinicians have designed a number of self-management support services to help patients manage their own condition through education, training or support to develop their knowledge, enhance their skills and improve psychological and social resources.

Dr Galdas said: "Men, as a group, are frequently underrepresented with many of these support services and are believed to be poorer self-managers than women, despite having an

increased incidence of many of the most serious and disabling long term conditions, such as [chronic pulmonary disease](#), diabetes and cardiovascular diseases.

"A growing body of research shows that risky or unhealthy behaviours, such as reluctance to access health services, are closely related to 'traditional' masculine attitudes that emphasise self-sufficiency, stoicism and robustness. This study shows that men may find self-management support more attractive when it is perceived as action-oriented, having a clear purpose, and offering personal meaningful information and practical strategies that can be integrated into their daily life."

**More information:** "The accessibility and acceptability of self-management support interventions for men with long term conditions: a systematic review and meta-synthesis of qualitative studies." *BMC Public Health* 2014, 14:1230 [DOI: 10.1186/1471-2458-14-1230](#)

Provided by University of York

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