

## Men's health, Part 2: Connecting the dots



*Dr Larry Goldenberg*

In the first of this two-part theme issue, we considered the need for a comprehensive men's health program in BC, and the treatment of erectile dysfunction and testosterone deficiency. In this second part, we consider three other areas of importance in men's health. Drs Bilsker and White review male suicide, a most important cause of life years lost. Dr Sutton and colleagues review osteoporosis, often thought of as an aging women's issue, but in fact a problem for males as well, with its own particular features and therapeutics. Finally, the article by Dr Bourgian, Mr Gallagher, and colleagues summarizes the most important cancers afflicting men

and what we might be able to do to reduce the impact on lives and society.

All of the topics considered in this theme issue are concerns of the Men's Health Initiative of BC (MHIBC), a nonprofit umbrella organization that serves as a brand name and a single point of contact at the centre of a diverse network of stakeholders. The MHIBC was launched in 2009 to identify, coordinate, and consolidate work being done across the many domains of male health in the province. By "connecting the dots" the initiative is helping the males of British Columbia improve their health and decrease their risks of disease, benefiting not only men but also the women and children in their families and the communities that surround them. The "dots" to be connected include the diverse foci of excellence that currently exist throughout health care delivery sectors, government, public health, educational, and research communities concerned with male-specific health issues, and the diverse communities in which men of different ethnicities and socioeconomic status live, work, and play.

The goals of the Men's Health Initiative are undeniably lofty: we're out to change the lives of men and their families by highlighting key biological, social, and cultural determinants for the best health care possible. We aim to add 10 better-quality life years,

especially in the middle of men's lives. We strive to become a global leader in men's health and provide world-class health care to men in British Columbia and beyond through widespread community and professional education, awareness campaigns, risk assessment, prevention, health promotion, screening and early diagnosis, and dissemination of best practices in clinical care. We know there are links between behavior, lifestyle, diet, activity, environment, workplace conditions, employment opportunities, availability of social services, and various illnesses that affect males of all ages. We also know there are connections between erectile dysfunction, cardiovascular disease, depression, hypogonadism, and metabolic syndrome. We believe that the success of a provincial and a national men's health strategy depends on highlighting these relationships and establishing a male-friendly health and wellness oriented society where a men's health campaign is seen as an equal partner to women's, children's, Aboriginal, and immigrant health campaigns. Failure to address the health needs of any of these groups impairs our ability to fully serve all of society's needs.

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