



# GLOBAL ACTION ON MEN'S HEALTH

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14 June 2021

Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus  
Director-General  
World Health Organization  
Avenue Appia 20  
1211 Geneva 27  
Switzerland

Dear Dr Tedros

## **COVID-19 and Men's Health**

*This open letter is being sent to you at the start of International Men's Health Week 2021 by Global Action on Men's Health and is jointly signed by a range of men's health organisations around the world.*

Tragically, at least two million men around the world have so far died as a direct result of COVID-19. Men have borne an excess burden of serious disease and mortality caused by COVID-19. The WHO has estimated that around 58% of all deaths are male and in some countries the proportion has been far higher.

The evidence points to a range of causes. Of particular significance is that men are more likely to have one of the underlying conditions that make serious illness and death more likely, such as hypertension and diabetes. Prevention guidelines on handwashing, mask-wearing and social distancing have not been effective at reaching men. There is, moreover, emerging evidence of lower vaccination rates in men.

The impact of the pandemic is gendered. Women have suffered more economically and from an increase in gender-based violence, for example. They have also had to cope with increased caring responsibilities at home. Much more must therefore be done to respond to the different needs of both men and women during the pandemic.

Global Action on Men's Health is calling for a range of measures, including:

- Gender-responsive actions at the global, national and local levels that take full account of the specific needs of men and boys as well as women and girls during the pandemic and its aftermath.
- The consistent publication of sex-disaggregated data on COVID-19 infection and mortality from a much wider range of countries.
- Data must also be further disaggregated to show how outcomes by sex intersect with age, income, race and other key variables.
- Research to understand better the causes of men's higher mortality and how it can most effectively be addressed. This must take full account of the intersectional impacts.
- The development and deployment of gender-responsive health promotion interventions to improve COVID-19 disease prevention and reduce transmission. Evidence of good practice in this field should be rapidly and widely disseminated.
- Sustained support for organisations supporting men and boys, including for employment, education, mental health, alcohol and gambling issues. Organisations that work with male perpetrators and male victims of domestic violence also have an important role to play.
- A focus on addressing the underlying conditions that are linked to men's higher mortality from COVID-19 and which in their own right have a significant impact on men's health outcomes.

Global Action on Men's Health believes that COVID-19 has exposed deep, long-established and widely-overlooked problems in men's health. These must be tackled strategically and systematically by gender-responsive research, policies and practices. Healthcare systems need to develop better strategies to reach and engage men in healthcare by consistently adopting a gendered approach to research, analysis and presentation of data, development of policy, and the organisation and deployment of services.

We believe WHO has a leading role to play in the improvement of men's health from COVID-19 and more broadly. We appreciate that you are very busy but would welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues with you. We would be grateful if your office could contact Peter Baker at Global Action on Men's Health to arrange a time to meet in the near future.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



**Peter Baker**  
**Director**  
**Global Action on Men's Health**



**Anthony Brown**  
**Chair**  
**Global Action on Men's Health**



**Greg Millan**  
President  
Australian Men's Health Forum



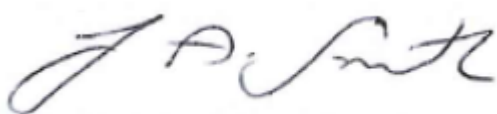
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Canadian Men's Health Foundation



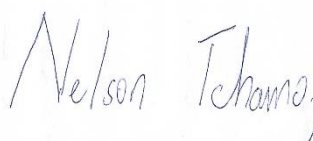
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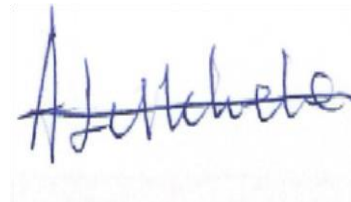
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