



Cancer Society New Zealand  
Te Kāhui Matepukupuku o Aotearoa

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## Media Release

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### International Men's Health Week 13-19 June

International Men's Health Week was conceived at the second World Congress on Men's Health in Vienna in 2002. Representatives from around the world launched the concept to increase awareness of male health issues on a global level. Delegates agreed to use the week to promote men's health and to encourage institutions to develop health policies and services to meet men's specific needs. So as winter starts to make its presence felt here, it's a good time to take a moment and have a look at some chilling statistics.

Do you know that each year in New Zealand, more men than women die prematurely from cancer, heart disease, diabetes, transport accidents, and suicide? And for Maori men the tale is even worse. They die at a rate that's almost twice that of non-Maori for lung cancer, diabetes and heart disease. While there are many theories about these statistics, one thing is for sure - things need to change to turn them around.

"One area we can look at is making primary health care more accessible for men rather than waiting until they are so sick they need to go to hospital. This may mean using some imagination, for example around the opening hours of GP's" says Dalton Kelly Chief Executive of the Cancer Society. "Some practices are starting to do this and while we have been saying this for some years now, the stats tell us not much has changed."

One area the Society is working to support is healthy places for men at work. The work environment is where men spend most of their day and so it is an ideal place to start making positive changes.

“The Society is developing a ‘*CanWork*’ programme which is well underway. The project has been made possible by the funds raised through Movember - the moustache growing month of November!

It’s hoped that by encouraging men (and women) to look at making some healthy lifestyle changes while at work we can make a dent in the statistics. We are not into making well people sick- we don’t want everyone running off to their doctor at the slightest twinge! Unless of course they are at high risk for developing some health problems then a conversation with a GP is a good idea. What we would like to see is people being supported to make some lifestyle changes now that will impact on their health as they get older.

And if they do have a problem- something that’s not right and has lasted for a couple of weeks, then they should not keep waiting to see if it goes away; go get some good medical advice, and that doesn’t mean you ask your mates!”

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