

BREAKING the mold



Giovanni Salimena Emerald

Suicide. Heart attacks. Diabetes. Accidents. Homicide. Cancer. HIV. These are some of the leading causes of death among men.

And while they may also be leading causes of death among women, men die on average seven years younger than women. They are one and a half times more likely than women to die from cancer. Twice as many men die from heart attacks. They account for nine out of every 10 deaths from AIDS.

The figures are startling, but we've known for years that women live longer than men. We've just accepted it. Women are more patient, more home-centered, more spiritual. Men are more stubborn, more restless, more careless. The stereotypes sometimes fit. But while they illuminate why men have shorter lives than women, they also shine light on how we can change that.

We need to break the stereotype of "the man." Challenging traditional male roles has been a trend since women began asserting feminist theory and in some ways, making men redefine themselves in contrast to the new woman. Society, throughout the years, has come to define manhood

in a very narrow box: You have to be strong, tall, stubborn, pain-free, successful and calm. Men don't cry. Men don't feel pain. Men don't ask for help.

And while these stereotypes have separated the roles of men and women, they have pushed men into such limited areas. Anything outside of the box is labeled wussy, nerdy, gay, weak or sissy. And when men are labeled by peers or by parents with these hurtful names, the answer is only to get back inside the box.

Well, women for years lived inside "the women's sphere," and the limiting of women to housework and raising children made them so angry that they took a stand. Now the women's sphere includes almost every profession and attitude imaginable.

Men need to take such a stand against their stereotype, and society should support this. Not only will it broaden the scope of all American lives, it might just help heal some gaps between men and women. Women want the sensitive guy — not the macho one. And boys need to be taught that being "girlish" isn't always a bad thing.

In the 1980s, men rediscovering their feminine

side and going into the woods to bang on drums gained some popularity. But it also became a target for satire. Maybe that's because it didn't have practical application. Feelings are fine. But knowing that letting out feelings may extend your life by seven years is a breakthrough.

And this shift in how we view men's health is the subject of a series of events throughout April put on by the University Health Center, the Counseling Center, the Office of Student Life and Physical Activity and Recreation Services. Dr. Will Courtenay, whose research produced the facts cited above, spoke Monday to fraternities and sororities about how to improve men's health by breaking the stereotypes of who men are.

Men's health is not limited to physicals and looking like Arnold Schwarzenegger.

It's more about learning to ask for help or guidance when you need it. To treat your pain. To take pride in the fact you care more about yourself than about your image.

And women like that.

This editorial represents the view of the Emerald editorial board. Responses may be sent to ode@oregon.uoregon.edu

Letters to the editor

Protesting for the sake of protesting

When I chose to attend the University, a major factor in my choice was the inherent liberalism of the school — a liberalism that I now see as a simple facade. Those of you protesting in front of Johnson Hall, those of you squatting on public land, those of you wasting taxpayers' money (who else is paying overtime bills to our county's finest?), those of you disrupting the educational process ... why are you going to school here? Are you here just to protest? You are championing a cause that was already in the process of being resolved, even before you started camping out in front of the administration building. Now, by making unreasonable demands (such

as forgoing the democratic process by attempting to bypass the University Senate and asking University President Dave Frohnmayer for full decision-making power) you're simply wasting everybody else's time.

Perhaps it is time to stop protesting simply for the sake of protesting. We're not our parents, and we don't need to live up to their activist legacies. Don't get me wrong — even I think that the Worker Rights Consortium is a valid group. But I do not condone the wanton disregard for the democratic process you've exhibited in your demands, and like much of the student body, I'm getting tired of the constant disruptions... so I will leave you with a final suggestion: Don't search for a cause simply for the sake of having one.

Jesse Wendel
English

CAHOOTS deserves funding

I appreciated Jonathan Gruber's story about CAHOOTS, Whitebird Clinic's mobile crisis van (ODE, April 4). I think it is indeed one of the more unique, valuable and cost-effective social services available in Eugene. They complement and support nicely what many other local service agencies, including Lane County Mental Health, do. Many of our clients, most of whom are low-income, are also served at various times by Whitebird generally and CAHOOTS specifically. (Of course, Whitebird also serves a lot of people who choose not to have anything to do with us.)

It's unfortunate, however, that CAHOOTS is available only in Eugene because Springfield has for years declined to participate in funding this much needed service — a service that

is needed in Springfield as much as in Eugene and would be better provided by CAHOOTS than by the Springfield Police.

Social services generally, and services to psychiatrically disabled adults specifically, increasingly fail to meet the need. This, even though the need grows significantly because of the closure of state psychiatric hospitals, the increasing needs of aging, disabled baby boomers, growth in population and other reasons. This means that compassionate, cost-effective help like that provided by CAHOOTS will play an increasingly important role in responding to the needs of one of our more vulnerable populations — a population that exists in all of Lane County, not just in Eugene.

Gary Cornelius
Program Services Coordinator
Lane County Mental Health

THE WEEK IN THUMBS



To helping ease the high school years

A new national ad campaign featuring Portland teens is encouraging kids to help and counsel friends who feel suicidal. "Suicide shouldn't be a secret" is the slogan, and the message is worthy.

To pressuring the corporations

The activist organization Global Exchange pressured Starbucks to buy more "fair trade" coffee beans Monday by announcing that it would protest the coffee shops in 30 cities this week. Global Exchange said that Starbucks could now be a leader in "establishing fair trade coffee as an economically valuable alternative" that should help curb exploitation of some coffee workers.



To 'Roman' prison guards

Eight prison guards in California went on trial Monday for inciting gladiator-style fights between inmates in one of the state's toughest prisons. Not all the classics are good.

To crash-and-burn airline service

Baggage handling is the only part of U.S. airline service not declining in quality according to researchers from the University of Nebraska at Omaha and Wichita State University. Time to pass an Airline Passenger's Bill of Rights.