MASCULINITIES AND HEALTH

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Hegemonic masculinity as damaging to health

- Risk
- Damaging to men, women and families health
- Can it be positive?

Movement towards gender equality and improvements in population health;

- Change through education and migration
- Change supported and facilitated by women
- Change in patterns of fatherhood and VAW
- Change through programmes
Eric Anderson’s theory of Inclusive Masculinity describes perceived changes in the ways some men conceive of and enact their masculinity. Employing ethnographic methods and “social-feminist thinking” (14)

Inclusive masculinity, like hegemonic masculinity, frames gender (partially) in terms of power relations. However, it suggests a shift toward a more egalitarian conception of masculinity and a less rigidly vertical notion of hierarchy.

Anderson claims that “university-attending men are rapidly running from the hegemonic type of masculinity that scholars have been describing for the past 25 years” (4).
Homohysteria “describes the fear of being homosexualized,”

Diminishing “homohysteria,” which Anderson defines as combining “a culture of homophobia, femphobia, and compulsory heterosexuality” (7).

According to Anderson, Connell’s definition of “hegemonic masculinity”—emerges as insufficient for describing “the complexity of what occurs as cultural homohysteria diminishes.” To rectify this shortfall, Anderson proposes “inclusive masculinity theory,” (7).
CRITICISMS (DE BOISE, 2014)

- Anderson misreads hegemonic masculinity to be a type of person as opposed to a web or matrix of configuration.

- Assumes that hegemonic masculinity is inflexible and doesn’t adapt to periods of low homohysteria.

- Assumes a singular dominant ideal, but Connell uses a multidimensional understanding of gender (incorporating multiple hegemonies).

- Claims of a ‘decline’ homophobia and homohysteria are questioned; can levels of prejudice be objectively established? Are acts like same-sex kissing indicative of attitudes, and is homophobia really as insignificant as Anderson claims?
HEGEMONIC & INCLUSIVE PRISON MASCU LINITIES WITHIN THE FIT FOR LIFE HEALTH PROMO TION INTERVENTION
In (largely male) prisons environments, there are performances of masculinity that are structured in both hierarchical and horizontal ways in reference to both hegemonic and inclusive masculinities.

Hegemonic masculinity


Inclusive masculinity

"inclusive form of masculinity based on social equality for gay men, respect for women, and racial parity and one in which... men bond over emotional intimacy" (Anderson, 2008, 604)
Prison is an ultramasculine world where nobody talks about masculinity. (Sabo et al 2001, 3)

...a hegemonically defined hypermasculine and heteronormative environment with an abundance of alpha males, sexism, and violence. (Jenness and Fenstermaker, 2013, 13)

...prison facilities are a particular kind of institutional setting, one that actively resists the diversity of masculine practices and identities. (Curtis, 2014, 121)

...places of great humour and playfulness, of friendship and camaraderie, of educational enlightenment, of successful therapeutic intervention. (Jewkes, 2013, 14).

in their mutual support and encouragement, it was also possible to discern sublimated forms of intimacy. Certainly, the vivid and joyful ways in which prisoners engaged in collective exercise, and the sheer amount of physical horseplay among younger prisoners, pointed to submerged emotional sentiments. (Crewe et al, 2013, 11)
Football Fans in Training (FFIT) has helped overweight and obese men lose weight, improve diet, and increase physical activity (Hunt et al, 2014, Gray, et al 2015)

Can FFIT be adapted to attract men to positive lifestyle change in a prison?
The Fit for LIFE project tested the feasibility of delivering an adapted version of FFIT, delivered in two prison gyms over course of 10 weeks.

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**Context**
- Prisons are largely all-male environments (93% in Scotland and similar worldwide)
- Fit for LIFE delivered to men-only groups

**Content**
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- The role of alcohol in weight management
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- Participative and peer-supported learning
- Encouraged male banter to facilitate discussion of sensitive topics
UNLOCKING POTENTIAL
TRANSFORMING LIVES

METHODS – PHASE 2 (OF 5…)

Prison A
Delivered to 18 prisoners by prison Physical Education Instructors (PEIs)

Data collection
Observations of all 10 sessions
Interviews with participants who completed programme (n=9)
Interviews with participants who did not complete (n=3)
Focus group with PEIs (n = 1)

Prison B
Delivered to 21 prisoners by community coaches from a professional football club

Data collection
Observations of all 10 sessions
Interviews with participants who completed programme (n=9)
Interviews with PEIs and staff (n=3)
'You're just a fucking poof anyway,' you know? 'What does it matter? 'What do you mean? What, because you want to do your own thing, you mean? No, because I'm gay and they know that. So they don't expect me to be sporty and... Do you ever get much hassle for that or none at all? Oh, yeah. I get hassle every day. That's terrible. Yeah. Yeah. And within the group, in the Fit for LIFE group was there...? No. (Prison A – P4)

I was hammering everybody fae the word go. I'm the sort o' person, see once I get up there I don't like anybody beating me, you know? Determined an' that, you know? (Prison B - P11)

And as I say when, ken when I got there I was like that, ‘right, fair enough.’ I mean you’re only putting your view forward. I mean we’re in a hostile situation here, eh? And people dinnae want tae speak forward in case the boy, “he’s a fucking idiot,” excuse my French. (Prison A - P11)
it was being a part of a group. On the outside I’m a lone person. I’m no’ part of any group. So see learning in a group, and interacting wi’ people, and speaking to people in the group that kept me motivated as well. (Prison A - P11)

it was important for me tae, for me tae do my thing and for me tae tell people that they was doing good at their thing, and encouraging them and pushing them and stuff like that. (Prison A - P3)

Well you’re having a laugh wi’ people and you’re no’ like if you’re coming tae the gym, it’s like you’re no’ the fattest person in the gym. So you’re here and yous are all kinda fat, yous are all here for the same reason. (Prison B - P3)
On the outside I’m a lone person. I’m no’ part of any group. So see learning in a group, and interacting wi’ people, and speaking to people in the group that kept me motivated as well. I mean I enjoyed the group. It’s one of the biggest things I’ll take away fae it has been involved in the group. (Prison A - P11)

...you dinnae want tae be yourself, ‘cause you just single yoursel’ oot, ken whit I mean? As I say you can put yourself the gither as a team an’ you take it on as a team, ken whit I mean? An’ you support each other through it. (Prison A - P2)

Yeah, there was two lads in particular that were like really taking the piss an’ I didn’t enjoy that bit. No-one had control over them. D’you know what I mean? But other than that everything went really, really well. (Prison B - P5)
You’ve gottae get **big**, aye, you’ve got a group, your group o’ guys, that’s what they’re intae, their bodybuilding an’ **they’re strength** things like that. (Prison A - P8)

You want everybody tae go intae a prison an' they all want tae dae the weights, **they a’ want tae get big an' strong**. That's what they all want tae dae. (Prison B P11)

I actually get people that go like that, “oh how long did it take you to get that [large] size?” **Guys were all wanting to get like me, and like as big as me kinda thing.** (Prison B P1)
Some people don't care aboot themselves 'cause they're in the jail, they've hit rock bottom. (Prison A - P7)

When I lost weight I kind o'... I like tae keep my strength up an’ I felt as if when I was losing my weight that I was losing my strength as well, that my strength was falling away. (Prison B - P11)

I think people in general do take a lot more care of themselves nowadays and it happens more in prison. So you're not automatically in inverted commas 'a poof' if you use face cream and keep yourself clean and... yeah. (Prison A - P4)
• Masculinity has shaped the planning and the experience of engagement in the Fit for Life programme.

• A gender and context sensitised health promotion intervention has the potential to facilitate engagement with a cohort of hard to reach and disadvantaged men in a secure setting.

• Performances of both hegemonic and inclusive forms of masculinity were evident amongst men who took part in the Fit for Life programme.

• Health promotion programmes such as Fit for Life have the potential to enhance more inclusive forms of masculinity.

• There are many, often contradictory implications for masculinities in taking part in programmes to enhance health and wellbeing.

• The Fit for LIFE programme is now being rolled out to all prisons in Scotland.