Masculinity, Physical Health, and Perceived Barriers to Help-Seeking

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine how men’s perception of barriers to help-seeking for a hypothetical physical health concern is predicted by the following variables: gender role conflict, conformity to masculine norms, physical functioning, age, socioeconomic status, and prior history of healthcare engagement. 275 male participants were recruited via online solicitation from the website Reddit.com. Main and interaction effects for the variables of interest were examined in relation to perceived barriers to help-seeking. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis indicated that gender role conflict, socioeconomic status, and resistance to encouragement from family/friends to seek help were statistically significant main effects, with gender role conflict accounting for 21.4% of variance in barriers. When interaction effects were added in the second step, gender role conflict continued to be the strongest predictor. No interaction terms were found to be statistically significant. These findings suggest that men who are sensitive to gender role conflict are most likely to perceive barriers to help-seeking for physical health problems. Implications for clinical interventions and future research are discussed.