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Real men don't diet': An analysis of contemporary newspaper representations of men, food and health

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Abstract

Little research to date has focused on the meanings men attach to food and the relationship between diet and health. This is an important topic in light of the current 'crisis' in men's health and the role of lifestyle factors such as diet in illness prevention. Since the mass media is a powerful source of information about health matters generally, media representations bear critical examination. The present paper reports on an in-depth qualitative analysis of contemporary UK newspaper articles on the topic of men and diet (N=44). The findings indicate a persistent adherence to hegemonic masculinities predicated on health-defeating diets, special occasion cooking of hearty meals, and a general distancing from the feminised realm of dieting. At the same time, men are constructed as naïve and vulnerable when it comes to diet and viewed as experts. The implications for health promotion with

men are discussed.



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Keywords

UK; Men's health; Masculinities; Diet; Media; Qualitative; Health promotion

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