

CHICAGO, Oct. 10, 2013 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Starting on playgrounds at an early age, many boys are taught that if they get knocked down, they should dust themselves off and keep playing. While these situations are chances for both genders to learn life lessons about perseverance and commitment, they can be the beginning of a lifelong trend of men avoiding the physician.

Ethan B. Kass, DO, an osteopathic psychiatrist, explained to his fellow osteopathic physicians during the American Osteopathic Association's [OMED 2013, the Osteopathic Medical Conference & Exposition](#), which was recently held in Las Vegas, that even though health care has been expanded to millions of Americans through the Affordable Care Act, men will continue to be reluctant patients and not see a physician as often as they should.

"What many men don't realize is that they actually are the weaker sex," says Dr. Kass. "It starts at conception with the male fetus having a greater risk of miscarriage or stillbirth, and continues throughout the lifespan, which for men is shorter."

Why is it So Dangerous to Be a Man?

Dr. Kass cautions that men are more likely to die before the age of 50 and will suffer from more health conditions during their lives including:

- Higher incidences of colorblindness and hearing loss
- Higher death rates from pneumonia and influenza
- Higher death rates from cancer and coronary artery disease

Even with these higher risk factors, men seem to not only avoid seeing a physician, but when

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they do, they are less likely to discuss emotional and mental health issues. They also spend less time with the physician than women, and are less likely to ask for and receive advice from the physician about changing risk factors for illness. Dr. Kass also explained that men are more distrustful of physicians and tend to be more skeptical of the benefits of medical treatments.

How Do We Get Men to the Physician?

Dr. Kass says one major step in getting men to seek out medical attention is to shake old perceptions that seeking help for medical or emotional problems is a sign of weakness. They need to see men they consider strong discussing medical health. Dr. Kass points to retired NFL player Joe Montana discussing hypertension as a good example.

Dr. Kass also recommends that physicians appeal to men's sense of masculinity and remind them that they can't protect and provide for their families if they are not healthy.

"It is time that men learn that asking for help from a physician is a good thing," notes Dr. Kass. "Gentlemen, ignoring medical symptoms or injuries is not the macho thing to do. Seeing a physician can save your life."

About the American Osteopathic Association

The American Osteopathic Association (AOA) proudly represents its professional family of more than 104,000 osteopathic physicians (DOs) and osteopathic medical students; promotes public health; encourages scientific research; serves as the primary certifying body for DOs; is the accrediting agency for osteopathic medical schools; and has federal authority to accredit hospitals and other health care facilities. More information on DOs/osteopathic medicine can be found at www.osteopathic.org.

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