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# **Exploring the Male Friendships and Masculinities** of Young Men who Identify as 'Light' Drinkers

Annamae Burrows, Professor Carol Emslie, Dr Elena Dimova, and Professor

University for the Common Good

Simon Hunter **Glasgow Caledonian University** 

## **1. BACKGROUND**

Men report more **difficulties making friends** and

fewer sources of emotional support than

women<sup>1</sup>.

**Drinking together** provides **intimacy** for men.

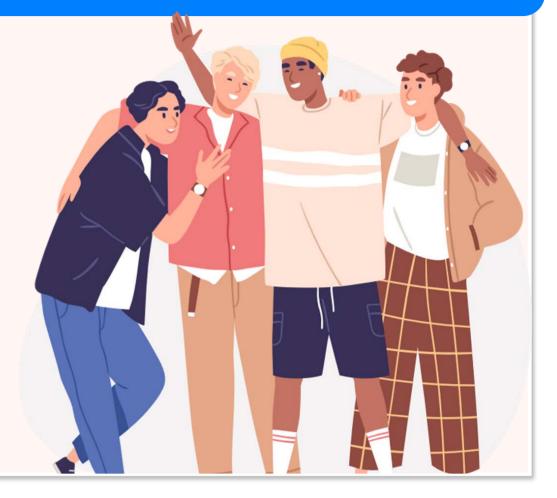
However, this can exclude non-drinking men and is associated with significant health risks<sup>2</sup>.

## 2. METHODS

**1. Focus groups** with men who self-identify as 'light' drinkers and their male friends.

**2.** Subsequent individual interviews

with 'light' drinkers



Study explores: Understandings of 'light'

drinking

Sense of social connection

Masculine Identity

Developing and

### **3. PRELIMINARY FINDINGS**

**Theme 1: Navigating Difficult Emotions** Without a Roadmap

• Challenged stereotypes of unemotional men. Confusion around healthy expression of 'negative' emotions. Concerns about media portrayal of violent men, lack of positive male role models, male friends who lacked emotional skills.

**Theme 2: Feeling** Excluded

**Theme 3: Barriers to Emotionally Intimate Friendships** 

- Perceived lack of support for men. Impact of term "toxic" masculinity. "For women, there's 'Ask for Angela', but for men there's no 'Ask for Dave', you know?"
- Shame, 'dominant' man dynamic, lack of practical hobbies.
- For LGBTQ+ men: Personal safety concerns, alienation in straight
- male spaces. Connection with straight male friends through **online**

gaming.

### 4. DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Young men perceive greater acceptance around discussing feelings.

However, they may need **more support and guidance in navigating** 

meaningful emotional expression, more examples of healthy

masculinities, and judgement-free spaces to explore masculinities.

### **CONTACT DETAILS**



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1. Office for National Statistics [ONS], 2018 2. Scottish Health Survey, 2019

