# Social media influencers shape health and views on masculinity among young men in the UK



A recent study conducted by the men’s health charity Movember has revealed significant insights into how social media influencers focused on masculinity impact young men in the UK. The research, which surveyed over 3,000 men aged 16 to 25 from the UK, the United States, and Australia between May and June 2024, indicates that more than a third of young men who consume this content have taken actions based on the advice given by these influencers.

The study found that 61 per cent of young men in the UK regularly engage with masculinity-themed social media content, which includes topics like fitness, self-improvement, and relationship advice. This engagement spans various ethnicities and income levels but is most prevalent among white, full-time employed, university-educated young men from high-income households.

Among those who follow these influencers, 35 per cent have acted on their advice in some form. This includes the use of testosterone injections, steroids, or diet pills, which are substances commonly associated with attempts to alter physical appearance or performance. Moreover, young men influenced by these social media figures are more likely to engage in risky behaviours, such as working out despite injuries.

The report highlights specific differences in substance use between young men who follow masculinity influencers and those who do not. For example, 24 per cent of followers reported using “smart drugs” — substances intended to enhance cognitive functions such as memory and focus — compared to 16 per cent of non-followers. Steroid use was reported by 14 per cent of these young men (vs. 9 per cent among non-followers), while testosterone use stood at 13 per cent compared to 10 per cent.

In addition to behavioural impacts, the research uncovered that young men engaging with these influencers tend to hold more traditional and restrictive views about masculinity and men’s roles in society. More than half (53 per cent) of these viewers agreed with the idea that men should fix their own problems without seeking help, and a striking 83 per cent believed men must be financial providers. Additionally, 70 per cent of followers perceived that women have it easier than men, a view shared by only 45 per cent of those not engaged with such content.

The study also touched on social and emotional dimensions, revealing that these young men were more dissatisfied with online dating and were likelier to perceive a mismatch in dating values between men and women. Despite these challenges, the research showed positive outcomes associated with consuming this motivational content. For instance, among UK respondents, 82 per cent felt more motivated, 61 per cent reported feeling happy, and 48 per cent experienced a greater sense of purpose. Reported anxiety and unhappiness were low at 4 and 2 per cent respectively.

Interestingly, young men following masculinity influencers placed greater importance on male friendships than their non-following peers, but these friendships were more often based on ambition, wealth, and popularity.

Sarah Sternberg, director at Movember, spoke to the Independent, emphasising the mixed impacts of these online communities. “This research identifies both the positive and negative effects that online content is having on young men,” she said. Sternberg added, “It’s our responsibility to ensure young men have access to diverse perspectives that support — not harm — their mental and physical wellbeing.”

While exact numbers regarding the prevalence of steroid and testosterone use among young men in the UK remain uncertain, rough estimates suggest between 500,000 and 1 million individuals use steroids. This new research sheds light on the role social media influencers play in shaping health behaviours and beliefs around masculinity in young men today.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/social-media-masculinity-men-andrew-tate-b2737180.html> - This article corroborates that more than a third of young men who view masculinity influencer content act on the advice given, and that 61 per cent of young men in the UK regularly engage with such content which covers fitness, self-improvement, and relationship advice. It also supports demographic details like the popularity among white, full-time employed, university-educated young men from high-income households and the associations with substance use such as testosterone injections, steroids, and smart drugs.[1]
* <https://cdn.movember.com/uploads/files/Media%20Room/UK/The%20Real%20Face%20of%20Mens%20Health%20Report%20-%20Movember%20UK.pdf> - This official Movember report provides detailed data on men's health, including statistics regarding the engagement of young men with masculinity-themed content and the impact on mental and physical health behaviors, supporting the study's findings about risk behaviors, substance use, and broader health implications among young men in the UK.[2]
* <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/social-media-masculinity-men-andrew-tate-b2737180.html> - The Independent article also verifies the differences in traditional masculine views held by followers of masculinity influencers, such as the high percentages agreeing that men should solve problems without help and should be financial providers, as well as perceptions about women’s societal experiences.[1]
* <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/from-himfluencers-to-toxic-masculinity-how-social-media-is-shaping-young-men/23wwkketj> - This SBS News piece discusses the dual impact of social media influencers on young men’s perceptions of masculinity, confirming that young men are affected both positively and negatively by these online communities, reflecting the motivational benefits and social challenges documented in the study.[5]
* <https://globalwellnessinstitute.org/global-wellness-institute-blog/2025/03/24/mens-wellness-initiative-trends-for-2025/> - This article from the Global Wellness Institute confirms that social media is a battleground for competing narratives on masculinity, highlighting the rise of both toxic hyper-masculine influencers and positive masculinity movements, thus supporting the study's emphasis on mixed effects of influencer content on young men’s well-being.[4]