

**TEXT 1****TOXIC MASCULINITY IS TERRIBLE SHORTHAND<sup>1</sup> FOR A REAL PROBLEM PLAGUING MEN**

**Rigid stereotypes about what it means to be a man are hard to change, but accusations reinforce rigidity even in people who want to grow.**

- 1 There is a popular (and controversial) name for the concept that men can suffer negative psychological consequences from trying to live up to traditional ideas of what it means to be men: "Toxic masculinity."
- 2 The idea, which has taken root in popular culture, originally started as a concept along the lines of what Olivia Petter once wrote in *The Independent*: that toxic masculinity "dictates that men should be stoic and strong, both emotionally and physically," and recognising that as a problem provides men an opportunity to rethink "what it means to be a man today, and what is generally expected of them by society."
- 3 But outside of academic circles, it's seemingly taken on a meaning — that all conceptions of masculinity are bad — that may be as toxic to men as the negative ideas it was initially meant to tease out. Psychologist Gad Saad, for example, has written that the term "toxic masculinity" itself pathologises masculinity "in ways that are harmful to the existential sense of self of young men."
- 4 The concept of "traditional masculinity ideology," as the report calls it, is a standard for maleness held by large segments of the population that involves "anti-femininity, achievement, eschewal<sup>2</sup> of the appearance of weakness, and adventure, risk, and violence" and is linked to "homophobia, bullying and sexual harassment."
- 5 That misapplication of the term is probably why the recent discussion of the American Psychological Association's (APA) new "Guidelines for the Psychological Practice with Boys and Men" (an attempt to reconsider the image of masculinity that, until recently, was considered the norm for all psychological development) has had a wider audience in lay circles than was likely intended.
- 6 The APA report was not, however, an effort to impose the concept of "toxic masculinity" on practitioners of my profession. Rather, it is an attempt to undo some of the very real rigid bands of stereotyping that can affect therapists, therapy's utility to men and the broader understanding of why men and boys behave in certain ways. This means, first and foremost, recognising that both men and women can be victims as well as victimisers.
- 7 As a psychotherapist, I often work with men and women who are struggling to come to terms with their sense of who they are. This psychological battle often includes questions about their strength and vulnerability, which is often translated into questions about their "masculinity" and "femininity."
- 8 For instance, some years ago, a couple told me that their 3-year-old son's preschool teacher had said that he seemed a little fragile. They were — not surprisingly — concerned whether he was going to grow up with emotional problems. When they asked the teacher what she meant, she said, "Well, he cries and says he's upset sometimes, especially when the other boys are roughhousing. He likes playing with the other boys, but I'm worried that he's not going to grow up feeling comfortable with himself as a guy. He's more like the girls, actually."

- 9 Beyond cases like that, many of the men with whom I work in psychotherapy come in at the request (or demand) of someone else — a spouse, partner, parent, or someone at their job or school — rather than because they feel the need for help. Research cited in the APA report confirms that my experience is not unique: It states that "many men do not seek help when they need it," in large part because help-seeking goes against many cultural, psychological and often religious or familial images of masculinity.
- 10 But, as psychotherapists and the general public review and revise our understanding of what it means to be masculine, we also need to make room for differences in personality and in experience.
- 11 Still, balancing our desire for our sons (and brothers, husbands and fathers) to find a balance between feeling "masculine" while embodying positive traits stereotyped as "feminine" is not as unrealistic as we sometimes think. The real trick is to recognise and respect the multiple facets that make any person who he or she is, without focusing so specifically on the qualities that define traditional gender differences.
- 12 And in my decades as a therapist, I have learned that change occurs only when we are able to acknowledge and accept our flaws and our strengths. Rigid, unexplored stereotypes are hard to change, while accusations and attacks reinforce rigidity, making it hard for anyone to shift their position, even if they want to.
- 13 But even as we recognise the negative impact that narrow stereotypes about masculinity can hurt both men and women, the phrase "toxic masculinity" can, as author Colleen Clemens puts it, "seem wildly insulting, even bigoted." The behaviours and beliefs need to be addressed — but defining male-ness as inherently negative can cause a person to harden their stance rather than to change.

[Adapted from the original written by F. Diane Barth, psychotherapist <<https://www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/toxic-masculinity-terrible-shorthand-real-problem-plaguing-men-ncna957941>>]

### Glossary:

<sup>1</sup>shorthand – a means of rapid writing by means of abbreviations and symbols/a short and simple way of referring to something.

<sup>2</sup>eschewal – to avoid or shun

**TEXT 2A**

**Lausanne** – Caster Semenya was given "the last word" when a week-long hearing at international sport's highest court ended on Friday, and her decade-long battle with track and field's ruling body neared a conclusion.

The two-time Olympic 800m champion from South Africa appealed to the Court of Arbitration for Sport against the IAAF's proposed hormone regulations, which would require Semenya and other female athletes with naturally high levels of testosterone to lower them through medication to compete at world-class events.

The regulations would apply to events from 400m to one mile, the range of distances Semenya currently competes in.

The Swiss-based CAS said the verdict, in what it called one of the most "pivotal" cases it has heard to date, will be announced by March 26.

The decision, which will be made by three CAS judges, has repercussions for sport and how athletes with what the case refers to "as differences of sexual development (DSD)" are treated. Semenya is not the only female athlete with high natural levels of testosterone, but has become the sometimes unwilling face of the contentious issue.

The verdict could have an immediate impact on Caster Semenya's career: The world championships in Qatar, where she is due to defend her 800m title, open in September.

If the IAAF wins the case, she must start taking testosterone-lowering medication straight away or switch to sprints or long-distance events.

Semenya's lawyers said at the outset of the hearing that the regulations discriminate against her and her "genetic gift." The IAAF argued that regulations were needed to ensure fairness in the sport because the South African runner and other DSD athletes have testosterone levels in the male range, giving them an unfair advantage.

[Adapted from the original found at: <[www.sport24.co.za/OtherSport/Athletics/semenya-given-last-word-as-gender-hearing-ends-20190223](http://www.sport24.co.za/OtherSport/Athletics/semenya-given-last-word-as-gender-hearing-ends-20190223)>]

**TEXT 2B**

**Quintin Davis** @quintindavis 5d

#Caster Semenya people born with biological advantages should not be discriminated against. Should we ban 7ft basketball players?

**Jordan Pfothauer** @JordanPfoth 4d

I could not make it through five minutes of what Caster Semenya has been forced to endure, let alone a decade.

**Avery Edison** @aedison 4d

Caster Semenya is an incredible woman and athlete and deserves, so, so much better than what this garbage world is throwing at her.

[Adapted from: <<http://twitter.com>>]

## TEXT 3

## Most Pro-Vaxxers have never even looked at a Vaccine Package Insert!



**Vaccine Package Insert** – A document that provides additional information on the vaccine. It is divided into sections highlighting important facts. It covers clinical pharmacology, uses, warnings, precautions, carcinogenesis, dosage & administration, etc. More importantly it covers the side effects/ adverse reactions. It shows biased limited studies excluding comparisons to the unvaccinated. You have every right to request and read through these inserts. These are your tools to help you in deciding if this major medical decision is right for your family.

**[Facebook.com/RageAgainstVaccines](https://www.facebook.com/RageAgainstVaccines)**

[Source: <<https://www.skepticalraptor.com/skepticalraptorblog.php/vaccine-package-inserts-debunking-myths/>>]

TEXT 4

# Vaccination Rates Vs Infection Rates

a guide for anti-vaxxers, so easy a 5th grader can understand it

You have a population of 1,000,002 people; of these 1,000,000 are vaccinated and 2 are un-vaccinated.



There is a breakout of 101 cases of the disease, of which 100 are vaccinated and 1 was not.



“Clearly”, the anti-vaxxer says, “you have an infection rate 100 times higher in the vaccinated group than in the non-vaccinated group.”



“No”, you reply, “the infection rate in the vaccinated population is 0.01%. The rate among the non-vaccinated is 50%, meaning the non-vaccinated group has an infection rate 5000 times as high.”



At that point, if they still insist the infection rate among the vaccinated is 100 times as high, either:

(1) They're lying.



OR:

2) They're the reason fast-food registers have pictures of the menu items, and make the change for you.



[Source: <<http://notawfulandboring.blogspot.com/2017/02/refutations-to-anti-vaccine-memes.html>>]

**TEXT 5**



[Source: <<https://www.wwweek.com/culture/2019/03/11/a-portland-marketing-company-created-a-fake-anti-vaccination-lifestyle-blog/>>]

**TEXT 6**

This sentence has five words. Here are five more words. Five-word sentences are fine. But several together are monotonous. Listen to what is happening. The writing is getting boring. The sound of it drones. Its like a stuck record. The ear demands some variety. Now listen ... I vary the sentence length, and I create music. Music. The writing sings. It has a pleasant rhythm, a lilt, a harmony. I use short sentences. And I use sentences of medium length. And sometimes, when I am certain the reader is rested, I will engage him with a sentence of considerable length, a sentence that burns with energy and builds with all the impetus of a crescendo, the roll of the drums, the crash of the cymbals – sounds that say listen to this, it is important.

Gary Provost