SOCIAL MARKETING: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK TO EXPLAIN THE SUCCESS OF MEN'S SHEDS FOR OLDER RURAL MEN?

Gary Misan, Paul Hopkins

ABSTRACT

Men's sheds have been described as a male-friendly service providing a 'health by stealth' approach to improving the well-being of older men. There is a dearth of theoretical models to explain the success of men's sheds. Moreover, there is no practice-based methodology to explain what attracts men in the first place, what motivates them to 'invest' in their shed, and what keeps them coming back. Social marketing is a practice-based methodology used by public health planners to deliver practical health programmes and campaigns in Australia, the UK and elsewhere, yet its incorporation into practical men's health work has received little attention. This paper explores whether the core framework of social marketing provides insight into the attraction of men's sheds. The study investigated changes in overall well-being as a result of shed participation and compared a literature derived social marketing framework with interview transcripts from shed participants. There was strong alignment between framework components and themes from interviews; several previously undescribed themes also emerged. The findings suggest that social marketing may offer a conceptual framework to explain the attraction of men's sheds and what benefits men derive from them. Results may guide the development of best practice models suited to shed development and maintenance, as well as broader interventions promoting social activity and well-being among older men.

Keywords: men's sheds, social marketing, 4Ps, rural, older men, health and well-being, Flourishing Scale

INTRODUCTION

Community men's sheds have become ubiquitous throughout Australia and are now growing in popularity in Canada, New Zealand, Ireland, and the United Kingdom (Australian Men's Sheds Association (AMSA) 2015). However, despite their popularity and the increased attention they are beginning to receive from policy makers and academics, there is currently limited research regarding possible theoretical frameworks that describe or in part account for the apparent success of men's sheds. Exploring such frameworks is important to better understand factors contributing to the planning, establishment and maintenance of men's sheds and may also help to guide broader community-based interventions promoting social activity among older men (Milligan et al. 2015:2-3).

BACKGROUND

Arguably originating in the 1970's, the typical community men's shed is a grass-roots organisation that provides a communal space for older men to meet, socialise, learn new skills and voluntarily take part in meaningful activities in the company of other men, for the benefit of the shed, themselves, or for the local community (Australian Government 2010b, Milligan, Neary, Payne, Hanratty, Irwin and Dowrick 2015, Wilson and Cordier 2013). In Australia, the men's shed movement was endorsed by the 2010 National Male Health Policy that stated the importance of men's sheds in alleviating social isolation, particularly in older males, thereby assisting in improving health and well-being (Australian Government 2010b:16). Since 2010, the Australian Government has allocated about Aus$6 million to the Australian Men's Sheds Association (www.menshed.org) to support the growth of the national men's shed network, to develop health promotion materials for men's sheds and to administer a shed grant programme for shed equipment, programmes or health promotion activities (Australian Government 2010a, Australian Government 2013).

While the benefits of shed participation are well described (Cordier and Wilson 2014, Golding 2011, Misan and Sergeant 2009, Moylan et al. 2015, Wilson and Cordier 2013), there appears to be only one study that posits a theoretical framework for understanding the dynamics or success of men's sheds (Ballinger, Talbot and Verrinder 2009). This study used the WHO Fields of Well-being model which combines the elements of vitality; positive social relationships; a personal sense of control over one's life and living conditions; enjoyable activities; and a sense

of purpose and a connectedness to community, as representative of the interdependent components of health. This work concluded that men's sheds provide an ideal health promoting environment because they promote social engagement through purposeful activity that participants enjoy and find meaningful.

While the Fields of Well-being model helps explain how men's sheds can indirectly contribute to the health and well-being of men, it fails to capture what it is about men's sheds that attract men in the first place, what motivates them to 'invest' in their sheds, how they see sheds best promoted to others and what keeps men coming back. Given that shed participants do not see sheds as an overtly therapeutic environment primarily designed to improve their health and well-being (Morgan 2010:12), the social marketing model may offer some insight into the direct attraction of men's sheds and as such served as the conceptual framework for this study.

The concept of social marketing originates from the work of Kotler and Zaltman who posited that commercial marketing methodology could also be used to address health and social concerns (Kotler and Zaltman 1971:1). Commercial marketers use the concept of segmenting markets to match products and services to consumer needs. Wendell Smith's conceptual article on segmentation of markets submitted that *"... market segmentation involves viewing a heterogeneous market as a number of smaller homogeneous markets, in response to differing preferences, attributable to the desires of customers for more precise satisfactions of their varying want."* (Smith 1956:4). Social marketing methodology postulates that like other markets, the 'health marketplace' is divided into target groups or segments identified as requiring action on a health or social concern. Segments can be based on many factors including geography, demographics, mortality or morbidity risk factors, psychographics, attitudinal beliefs, and behaviours (Weinrich 2011:52-53).

Andreasen defines social marketing as *"... the application of commercial marketing technologies to the analysis, planning, execution and evaluation of programmes designed to influence the voluntary behaviour of target audiences in order to improve their personal welfare and that of society."* (Andreasen 1994:3). Applying these principles to the health sector has resulted in social marketing becoming an underpinning framework for policy aimed at effecting behavioural change and improving health (Stead et al. 2007). Market research principles are

applied to examine a segment's preferences for investing in a product – in this case a health and well-being improvement intervention – including the potential formats the intervention might take. By analysing the market in this way, the health intervention (i.e. the 'product') can be designed to best engage the target segment and address particular issues of concern.

More specifically, having identified the segment and the issue(s), social marketing methodology requires that certain core concepts — abbreviated here as the '4Ps'— be used to develop the framework or marketing mix for the intervention. 4Ps is an acronym that abbreviates the four constructs of *product*, *price*, *place* and *promotion* (Hopkins and Voaden 2010 :83 - 95). The 4Ps provide a framework enabling incorporation of perspectives from a range of disciplines including health promotion, psychology, sociology, and social anthropology among others, about how to best engage a particular population segment (Kotler and Zaltman 1971:4). The framework requires that for each particular segment and type of intervention, the 4Ps should describe the characteristics or themes that are most likely to resonate with the target segment and thus be suited to influence the target segment's health-related behaviours and their potential investment in the intervention.

The 4Ps are explicated as follows:

- *Product*: the information, service, resource, material or psychological product that may affect behavioural change and/or improve health outcomes.
- *Price*: the financial, physical, emotional, or social cost of the product [1].
- *Place*: where the product will be delivered? [2]
- *Promotion*: strategies to inform the target segment about the product [3].

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[1] The questions the 'price' component aims to address are whether the health behavioural change product is culturally acceptable to the target segment, and what must the target segment do to engage with the product and invest in it? If the financial, social, cultural or emotional cost is too high this may deter the target segment's involvement with the product.

[2] 'Place' characteristics include providing appropriate outlets for the effective distribution or placement of the product so as to enable access to the target segment.

[3] 'Promotion' seeks enunciation of what media the target segment are most familiar with and thus most likely to respond to, how might these be utilised to reach the target segment and incentivise them to invest in the product? Innovative promotion may include advertising through print or other media, broadcast (radio, television), the internet, entertainment media (e.g. sporting events), social events, social media and personal interaction.

Social marketing can thus be considered a dynamic field of practice that encompasses a broad range of initiatives including advertising campaigns, community outreach work, targeted health improvement programs, and the design of specific health services (Lefebvre 2011). Examples of health interventions drawing on social marketing methodology include public health campaigns on smoking cessation, drink driving, obesity, and sports-based initiatives. (Australian Aid 2015, Hastings and McDermott 2006, NHS (Hull:Yorkshire and Humber 2011).

Despite its use in the design of public health interventions, the application of social marketing's 4Ps to develop a marketing mix that appeals to a segment of older men has not been described as directly informing the development of men's sheds. This then raises the question: *can the apparent success of men's sheds as an effective health improvement environment for a segment comprising mainly older men, be explained using attributes that characterise social marketing methodology?* That is to say, in the absence of what we know as the community men's shed today, if social marketers were seeking to create an environment appealing to older men, where men might come together to socialise, to practise trade and other skills, and contribute to their communities, then might the marketers propose a setting that looks a lot like men's sheds do today.

The challenge is to substantiate this hypothesis. To do this necessitates the development *a priori*, a 4P framework that characterises an environment beneficial to the well-being of older men. This framework should then be juxtaposed with shed participant descriptions of prerequisites, motivations, enablers and benefits of men's sheds. The degree of corroboration between the extant 4P themes derived from the literature and participant sentiments derived from interviews and other methods, will serve to either confirm or repudiate the hypothesis.

STUDY AIM

The aim of this research was to examine whether a key component of social marketing methodology, the core 4Ps, can be developed and applied to explicate what men's sheds participants say about the attraction of men's sheds, what keeps them coming back, what they derive from sheds, how they perceive sheds and think how sheds should be perceived by those external to shed environment.

The research questions were:

- What do participants view as the main purpose and outcomes for a men's shed?

- What motivates men to be part of the men's shed community?

- What operational or other attributes of the shed are appealing to participants?

- What attributes do participants view as important to the operation of a men's shed (e.g. location, access, eligibility, cost, activity, management, promotion)?

- What are the personal and orthogonal benefits participants view as accruing from participation in sheds?

- What are the perceived barriers and enablers to participation in sheds?

STUDY SETTING

The study was undertaken in regional South Australia (SA) and a rural town in the UK. The SA setting involved 32 participants from three sheds in regional towns on the west coast of SA's Eyre Peninsula. At the time of the study, the first was a mining town, the second an electricity power generation town and the third, a small fishing town. At the time of writing the populations were 22,000, 14,000 and 1200, respectively; each town falls within the lowest decile of economic and social disadvantage for the State. The first and third sheds had been established within 5 years of conducting the study; the second had been operating for more than 10 years. The number of shed members was approximately 35, 25, and 12 respectively. Sheds were typical of sheds in the State catering for older men and offering a male-friendly environment with social spaces and a workshop for small mostly wood or metal construction, restoration or repair type projects.

The UK shed, with 11 of its 20 members participating in the study, was also established in the 5 years prior to conduct of the study and is based in a small rural town of 6,000 in the south west of England; as well as an agrarian economy the town also hosts some light industry. The UK shed offers a similar range of activities to those found in the Australian sheds. The UK town's district ward area falls into the least 20 per cent (northern part of ward area) and the second least 20 per cent (southern part) of deprived areas in England; the proportion of older people living in income deprived households falls into the middling 20 per cent.

METHODOLOGY AND METHOD

Study Design

A case study design was used as the project framework. A case study is *"... a method of studying elements of the social through comprehensive description of a single situation, program or case [and where] emphasis is placed on understanding the unity and wholeness of the particular case".* They are often used to form the basis of a theory, to provide evidence for a theory or to bring new variables to light (O'Leary 2004, pp. 115-116). Participants were mostly older, retired men of white European heritage (demographic segmentation) with an interest in manual craft skills (psychographic segmentation) and living in comparative rurality (geographic segmentation). Four female participants were also interviewed, one of whom was a shed coordinator, one the secretary of a shed management committee, and two were partners of shed members. Each female was a registered member of their respective sheds but none participated in the day-to-day trade type activities of the shed.

Figure 1. Summary of participant characteristics

	No. interviewed	Older than 50 years	No. males	Trade background	Living alone	In receipt of welfare	Retired
Australia	32	30	29	19	2	25	29
UK	11	9	10	4	3	9	7

Interviews

Data was collected from semi-structured interviews from the four participating sheds and through the administration of a short survey. One focus group was also conducted with members of one of the SA sheds (mining town); the focus group session more closely explored the themes generated from the analysis of SA participant interviews. A summary of participant characteristics is provided in Figure 1.

The question guide for the interviews was termed the 4Ps Impact Assessment (4PIA) tool (Figure 2). The 4PIA was developed by the authors following a review of articles relating to factors promoting older men's health (Bird and Rieker 1999, Campbell et al. 2007, Cordier and Wilson 2014, Hopkins and Voaden 2010, Milligan, Neary, Payne, Hanratty, Irwin and Dowrick 2015, Morgan et al. 2007, Robertson et al. 2015, Wilson and Cordier 2013)

Figure 2. Indicative questions from the 4PIA Assessment Tool (4PIA)

Question domain	Indicative questions
Product	• Why do you enjoy going to the shed? • What is your purpose for going to the shed? • What activities at the shed make it worthwhile for you to go there? • What benefits does the community get from the shed? • What help or support could you get from the shed if you had a problem?
Place	• What makes the shed a cheerful place? • What social network does the shed provide? • What socialising with men from the shed goes on at other times when you are not at the shed? • What can you talk about at the shed that you might not talk about at home? • How would a lot of much younger men (<40) joining the shed make you think of it as a place to go to?
Price	• What sort of welcome are new members given at the shed? • What sort of work did you do before you retired? • What if the activity at the shed was different to the type of work you did before you retired? • What do you think the opening times of the shed should be? • What more can be done to make the shed a place that men would want to go to?
Promotion	• How did you find out about the shed? • What do you think of the wording on the men's shed leaflet? • Which other businesses or organisations in the town do you think might help to promote the shed? • How do you think the shed should be promoted to other men?

The interviews sought information regarding participant background; their understanding of the shed aims and purpose; how members learned about the shed; their motivation for attending; what they liked and didn't like about the shed; perceptions about access and the benefits accrued from attendance, and how they would prefer the shed to develop and be promoted (Figure 2). All interviews and focus groups in Australia and the UK were conducted by the same researcher (PH). Interviews took about 30 minutes and the focus group one hour; permission was sought to audiotape all sessions.

Figure 3. Themes derived from the literature review relating to each of the 4Ps for improving men's health

4P component	Description	Component Themes
Product	Refers to the Product or intervention (i.e. the shed) effect on the mental health and well-being of participants	socialising; relaxing; self-worth; beneficence; support
Price	Price (or cost) refers to the factors or attributes that make investing in the Product acceptable or favourable	familiarity; humour; acceptance; appreciation; affinity
Place	Place refers to the Product's environment and setting that makes it conducive and convenient for the participants to engage	locality; timing; access; reception; purpose
Promotion	Refers to how the Product ought to be promoted, including the message (s) used.	information; advertising; media; identification

Survey

The Flourishing Scale survey instrument was administered to provide a measure of participant self-perceived success in relationships, self-esteem, purpose, and optimism. First reported by Diener, the Flourishing Scale (FS) is a tool developed to assess psychosocial flourishing based on theories of psychological and social well-being. The FS *"… consists of eight items describing important aspects of human functioning ranging from positive relationships to feelings of competence, to having meaning and purpose in life."* (Diener et al. 2010). The scale provides a single psychological well-being score; each element is scored on a scale from one (1; strongly disagree) to seven (7; strongly agree), which are then summated, giving a maximum total score of 56. The FS was given to participants to complete prior to the 4PIA interview taking place; the FS sought perceptions of participants before they joined the shed and then asked to reflect on changes since they joined the shed (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Flourishing scale questionnaire (Diener, Wirtz, Tov, Kim-Prieto, Choi, Oishi and Biswas-Diener 2010)

For each of the statements below, please select the response which best agrees with your feelings

Before I joined the shed

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know	Don't want to answer
I lead a purposeful and meaningful life									
My social relationships were supportive and rewarding									
I was engaged and interested in my daily activities									
I actively contributed to the happiness and well-being of others									
I was competent and capable in the activities that are important to me									
I was a good person and live a good life									
I was optimistic about my future									
People respected me									

After I joined the shed

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know	Don't want to answer
I lead a purposeful and meaningful life									
My social relationships are supportive and rewarding									
I am engaged and interested in my daily activities									
I actively contribute to the happiness and well-being of others									
I am competent and capable in the activities that are important to me									
I am a good person and live a good life									
I am optimistic about my future									
People respect me									

Ethics

Participation in the study was voluntary. Participants were given an information sheet outlining the study aim and other details, together with a consent form. Ethical approval was granted by the University of South Australia for the Australian cohort; the UK cohort followed

the established research protocol using the FS and 4PIA tools and was undertaken independently following UK Social Research Association ethical guidelines.

DATA ANALYSIS

Survey data was analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics Ver. 23 (IBM Corporation, NY, USA). Descriptive statistics were applied to test for the integrity of individual survey question scores as well as combined scores for both pre- and post- components of the survey. Due to the small numbers, data from the Australian sheds were deemed a single sample and were combined for analysis. Both parametric (paired T-test) and non-parametric tests (Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test) were applied for both within group (UK pre- and post-; Aus pre- post-) and between group (UK vs Aus, pre- and post -) for aggregated FS scores. The threshold for statistical significance was $p <= 0.05$ (Figure 5).

Qualitative data was coded manually, guided in the first instance by the concepts arising from social marketing theory. Common concepts were grouped into categories which were subsequently collapsed into broader themes and sub-themes. Investigators coded interviews independently and cooperatively resolved differences in coding where they arose. The analysis involved returning to transcriptions in an iterative process to ensure essence statements, themes and sub-themes were adequately captured. Themes were identified and reported irrespective of coding and source frequency. Where descriptions were evident from 60 per cent or more of the interviews, themes were denoted as prominent and others secondary.

FINDINGS

Quantitative Analysis: Flourishing Scale

Data from 42 surveys were suitable for analysis, 31 for the Australian cohort and 11 from the UK; one Australian participant failed to complete the survey. Mean FS pre-scores were 41 out of 56 for both UK and Australia; post-FS scores were 47.5 and 45.4 for Australia and UK, respectively (Figure 5). For both parametric and non-parametric tests, pre- and post- FS scores for the Australian shed participants demonstrated a statistically significant improvement in the collective measure of wellbeing after joining the shed; a pre- versus post- score difference was not demonstrated for UK shed participants, possibly due to the small number of UK participants.

Neither parametric nor non-parametric between-group tests were able to demonstrate a statistical difference in pre- or post-FS scores between the UK and Australian samples. This result corresponds with the null hypothesis that UK and Australian samples were not different (Figure 5), although it is noted that the small sample size may have limited the sensitivity of the test results.

Figure 5. Univariate and bivariate analysis results of FS scores

	Pre-FS Score		Post- FS Score	
Within-group tests				
	Australia (n=31)	UK (n=11)	Australia (n=31)	UK (n=11)
Mean	41.3	41	47.5	45.4
Minimum score	11	18	11	21
Maximum score	53	56	55	56
Standard deviation	10.9	10.75	7.4	9.37
Matched pairs T-test (pre- vs post)				
	Australia (n=31)	UK (n=11)		
df	30	10		
Mean	-6.2	-4.4		
Standard deviation	9.23	12.2		
95% CI	-9.5 – -2.8	-12.6 – 3.8		
p (2-tailed)	0.001	0.26		
Wilcoxon signed rank test				
	Australia (n=31)	UK (n=11)		
positive differences	20	7		
negative differences	4	1		
No. of ties	7	3		
p (asymptotic)	0.000	0.123		
Between-group tests				
T-test (independent samples)				
	Pre-FS Score (Australia vs UK)		Post-FS Score (Australia vs UK)	
df	40		40	
mean difference	0.35		2.2	
standard error of difference	3.8		2.8	
95% CI	-7.3 – 8.1		-3.5 – 7.8	
p (2-tailed)	0.926		0.445	
Independent samples median test				
	Pre-FS Score (Australia vs UK)		Post-FS Score (Australia vs UK)	
total N	40		42	
median	45		48	
df	1		1	
significance (asymptotic)	0.612		0.891	
Yates correction (asymptotic)	0.879		0.823	

Qualitative Analysis

Twenty-three interrelated themes emerged from the 43 interviews of which 14 were prominent themes. Eighteen emergent themes were consistent with the 19 themes described by the 4PIA; 12 of the 19 were prominent themes. Five themes were new themes not included in the 4PIA model, two being prominent themes. The emergent themes, prominent or otherwise, were

similar for the UK and Australian samples, except as by frequency given the smaller UK sample size. For both sites, common themes emerged from *product, price, place* and for *promotion (*Figure 6). One item (*appreciation*) was not apparent as a theme in either sample.

Product themes

Socialising

Participants valued the socialisation aspect of the shed. For both samples this was a prominent theme. Participants described the shed as a setting where men could enjoy the company of other men, where new connections could be made, where camaraderie, mateship and friendship could be found and fostered, and where men could share a laugh or experiences over a cup of tea or project.

> *"…just the social interaction, the woodwork, the cup of tea and having a chat, it provides a network for the older men in the community who may be socially isolated – they may not be married or [may] live by themselves, or [may] have lost their partners – it gives them a whole bunch of people to talk to with [who have] different life experience." (SA shed member)*

Relaxation

Relaxation, a secondary theme was commensurate with socialisation. Participants commented that the shed provided a place where one could take a break from the rigour or stresses of home and other activities outside the shed, even though the shed itself was a 'busy' place. Others commented on the purposeful relaxation offered at the shed through engineered 'down-time' from shed activities, where members were encouraged to refrain from 'work' and simply sit, play games, read, eat, drink or socialise.

> *"…tea breaks are a good thing. It's not just about work, it's about having a cup of tea and having a chat, looking out for each other. It's great." (UK shed member)*

Self-worth

Another secondary theme was that the shed provided a renewed sense of worth or identity, variably expressed as improved self-esteem, a renewed sense of purpose, satisfaction, feeling useful again and still having something to offer.

> *"I can teach people and people can teach me. [I get] a sense of satisfaction, that I'm doing something [worthwhile], a sense of purpose, that I'm doing something with my life. It gives me a satisfaction to be here, to teach people how to do lead lighting, carpentry." (SA shed member)*

Figure 6. Themes arising from participant interviews

4P theme set	Description	Interview themes
Product		**Product**
Socialising	Meeting for social purposes	*Socialising* [4]
Relaxing	Affording rest from other activities	Relaxing [5]
Self-worth	How a person values themselves	Self-worth
Beneficence	Helping others	*Beneficence*
Support	Being helped by others	*Support*
Price		**Price**
Familiarity	A comfortable environment	*Familiarity*
Humour	Being amused	*Humour*
Acceptance	I can express personal concerns	Acceptance
Appreciation	People appreciate me	Appreciation [6]
Affinity	Liking others/friendship	*Affinity*
Place		**Place**
Locality	The service location	Locality
Timing	Service opening time	Timing
Access	Joining in with others at the shed is easy	Access
Reception	People are friendly	*Reception*
Purpose	The activities interest me	*Purpose*
Promotion		**Promotion**
Information	How I found out about the service	*Information*
Advertising	Shed leaflet/promotional material	*Advertising*
Media	Relevant media for segment	*Media*
Identification	Identifying with 'town'; a space for men was attractive	*Identification*
New themes		**New themes**
External input[1]	Professional input is an incentive	External input
Leadership[2]	Provides direction/governance	*Leadership*
Structure[2]	Provides structure for day/week	Structure
Community cohesion[2]	Facilitates understanding/inclusion	Community cohesion
Capacity [3]	Adequate space and equipment are available	*Capacity*

Legend:
1. Product theme
2. Price theme
3. Place theme
4. Italic entries are prominent themes (described by >=60 per cent of respondents)
5. Regular entries are secondary themes
6. Underlined items were absent from interviews

<u>*Beneficence*</u>

Beneficence – defined as being generous or giving to others – was a prominent theme and is related to self-worth above. Many participants touted their sheds as generally magnanimous organisations where help and support to other shed members as well as to the broader community, were available. This suggested beneficence may be a primary motivating factor making a shed an attractive product for participants. Applying trade or other skills, helping others, being part of a community of men, and contributing to their local community were all valued by participants. This was augmented by a sense of satisfaction derived from participating in meaningful activities (e.g. construction or repairs) and contributing to shed and community

outcomes through the collective skills of shed members.

> *"It's about wanting to see a community initiative take hold, be successful, become integral to the community and to be beneficial to the community. I don't go to the shed to do woodwork, I can do that at home, I go to help develop the shed into something that helps the members, that provides a setting for them to socialise and do things, including for the community. These are things that the men see as beneficial." (SA shed member)*

Support

Another prominent theme was *support*, where participants described sheds as a setting where they not only received trade or skills-based support from the wide experience and knowledge-base of fellow members, but also support for personal issues and concerns, for example, grief and loss, relationship problems and ill-health. The extent of personal disclosure varied among participants with many happy to discuss concerns or issues from the outset while others waited to become better acquainted with fellow members, and a few preferring to remain private. Others commented on how the shed environment and particularly being in a group of men, had contributed to improvements in their mental health.

> *"It's about maintaining my mental health, the interaction with others, while for example, repairing a table that I made 60 years ago at school; [I got] help with that. I haven't so much talked about my health issues with others here, it's just about being around other people." (UK shed member)*

> *"Since my wife died the shed has become my home, it saved my life." (SA shed member)*

Price Themes

Familiarity

The shed provided an environment familiar to many study participants, either by way of a predominantly male environment, familiar plant and equipment, or utilising skills, applying knowledge or undertaking activities familiar to participants, often from their previous working lives. This familiarity, exemplified as a shared interest in the use of tools or equipment and being able to practice a craft or skill familiar from other contexts, was a popular reason for participants wanting to invest time in their shed.

> *"...it's like work but then not like work" (SA Shed member)*

Humour

Laughter, joking, the light-hearted banter and cheerfulness were popular attributes described as creating a convivial, informal and positive atmosphere in sheds and making people feel welcome. These factors were pivotal in shaping the social environment and were reflective of the informal and limited hierarchy evident in the sheds compared to previous workplace settings.

> *"There's always somebody doing something funny. Not necessarily silly, but saying or doing something that makes people laugh. Reacting to comments, it's just the mateship. It improves mental health. You have to be able to laugh at people, with people and at yourself."*
> *(SA shed member)*

Acceptance

The *product* theme of 'support' refers to the shed being a setting where men are aware that support of a practical or personal nature is available. The *price* theme of 'acceptance' refers to an individual man feeling it is safe to disclose personal issues to fellow shed members to receive support. Although not widely raised, feeling accepted was generally perceived as a valued attribute of sheds because members were accepted regardless of background or infirmity. Sheds were seen as non-discriminatory and non-judgmental, accepting of members from different cultures and backgrounds and with different physical capacities. The limited hierarchy resulted in no member's background being accorded prominence over another's, and those with disabilities being accepted and supported.

An underlying strength of the shed environment and an important basis for shed operation was men feeling comfortable discussing social, emotional, physical, or psychological issues with other shed members. This comfort was attributed to the relaxed, male-friendly setting and members being confident that issues raised would remain confidential to the shed. Those who had disclosed personal concerns did not indicate that their acceptance by other members had been compromised but rather that they felt supported by their peers.

> *"Sometimes [it is] men's issues, like mental health or physical health [that the men talk about]. Some men can't open up to their wives or partners, whereas they may open up in here." (SA shed member)*

Appreciation

Being liked by others was not a theme overtly acknowledged during the interviews as a reason for participants investing in sheds. While participants commented on liking other men or admiring other men's skills and the opportunity to learn from them, the theme of being appreciated or liked by other men for their own skills or personal attributes did not appear to be a reason for men spending time at their shed.

Affinity

Camaraderie, fellowship, mateship and friendships were terms used frequently by study participants to describe the social atmosphere of the shed. Whilst not openly stating "*I go to the shed because I like the men there*", friendship and cultivating new relationships appeared to be a strong theme for men investing in the shed. This theme was commensurate with the theme of socialising, described previously.

> *"Enjoying and sharing good fellowship, making new friends and meeting old ones; to have a brew [cup of tea]. " (SA shed member)*

Place Themes

Locality

The location or positioning of the study sheds was not described as a critical factor for study participants. This perhaps was because the Australian and UK sheds were centrally located in socially cohesive neighbourhoods, generally easily accessible by private car, taxi or public transport; free parking was also close at hand. For one SA shed, placement and accessibility were important considerations from the outset, including a central, non-residential location, on a bus route. Conversely, another SA shed while initially pleased to be situated on hospital grounds, found later that this limited the range of activities available; members commented that it in retrospect it may have been preferable to locate the shed at a more independent site, less encumbered by the health services risk averse policy and procedures.

Timing

As another secondary place theme, participants were generally happy with shed opening times. Restricted operating hours were most often the result of limited personnel or funding to enable adequate for additional opening times.

"I'd like it to be open five days a week. When you retire you can only walk around your house so many times." (SA shed member)

Where operating hours were limited, some saw the value in having the shed open on extra days so as to provide more flexibility and accommodate more members, although the barriers mentioned previously were acknowledged.

Access

Participants did not comment particularly on the ease of joining their respective sheds, however it was noted that some people took longer to feel 'at home' at the shed than did others.

"It's difficult to engage with some people, because they have other issues, unemployment, lack of self-esteem or confidence in joining a group; it's the more confident guys who seem to get involved. We do try to support people, that's the idea of the buddying system. If someone comes in who is vulnerable, we'll pair them with a member of the shed who's been here a while to look after them. We try to help, but if they don't come through the door in the first place then we can't." (UK shed member)

Reception

The warmth and friendliness of the welcome received by new members and the efforts shed members made to ensure new members felt welcome and supported was appreciated by many study participants and was described as a factor prompting participants to continue attending the shed.

"You're introduced to everyone, given a tour. The welcome made my mind up that I wanted to stay, that I'd feel comfortable here." (UK shed member)

There was a special emphasis in some sheds regarding pastoral care for members. As described above, the UK shed had adopted a 'buddy' system where new members were paired with existing members to provide support in the early phase of joining the shed. In one SA shed, a shed member is specifically tasked with providing pastoral care for new members as well as following up members who are unexpectedly absent.

Purpose

The range of activities available, for example tools, woodworking and learning opportunities, combined with the socialisation aspects made the shed appealing to participants.

"The shed's not a panacea and won't be of interest to all men, but for those that come it,

satisfies a number of things: camaraderie, mateship, friendship; the opportunity to make and fix things; to learn from others; to belong to something; to have a sense of identity and to feel productive. "(SA Shed member).

Also, having a variety of activities available, meant members could 'pick and choose' rather than feeling compelled to do certain activities because of limited choice or facilities.

"...the variety enables me to use the skills that I have and to learn new skills, to teach others where I can. If there was only one thing, I might get a bit bored or it might deter people who think you need to be an expert at something to come. (SA shed member)

Promotion themes

Information

Interviewees reported a range of sources regarding how they first learned about their sheds, including: public meetings canvassing interest in establishing a shed (SA shed), or reading about the shed in local newspaper articles or community notices, or through radio and television coverage. Word-of-mouth, seeing the shed being promoted at local fairs, or at the local hardware store BBQ, were other ways information about the respective sheds had been garnered by participants.

Advertising

Advertising refers to the appeal of each shed's promotional material. Leaflets and business cards, as well as apparel (shirts, aprons and hats emblazoned with the shed logo), were common ways sheds used to promote themselves. In general, participants favoured the use of this material as it was relatively low cost and had a long life span. In shed promotional material, appropriate use of language and graphics was important in order to engage the demographic of men who would potentially benefit from joining their local shed; use of humour, lay language and pictures potential members could identify with, were also seen as important.

"I think it's [the brochure] good, it covers everything. Words like 'bloke' and 'missus', that's the sort of language the blokes in the shed use. It'll help to attract men." (SA Shed member)

Some participants commented that they did not like inferences to health issues in promotional material (e.g. smoking and alcohol-free zones) because even though the sheds could have health benefits, this was seen as a secondary outcome and not their main objective.

Media

A range of approaches rather than a single medium were described when commenting on the types of media best likely to attract potential members. Local newspapers (frequent articles and adverts), local radio and television (the most costly) had been used and were complemented by use of posters, sidewalk notice boards and BBQs as well as by participating in local events. Participants acknowledged that cost influenced media choice since funds were often limited. Media that targeted partners was mentioned as a novel approach, whereby appealing to partner desires to be free of their menfolk from time to time by sending them to their local shed. Longer established sheds felt little need for active promotion; conversely, newer sheds acknowledged that promotion through a range of media was important to establish their profile.

Identification

Having the name of the town as part of the shed name was not seen as particularly important although the study sheds were all named after their respective towns. However, having 'men's shed' as part of the name was important, to give them brand authenticity and denote them primarily as a place for men. Some commented that sheds should be promoted as being primarily for older men while others suggested this not occur since it might deter younger people from joining.

> *"...what pleases me is the respect the community has for the concept, that may be because of the name, it may be the name being spot on about what it is, and people seem to respect it, understand its purpose and support it. The name is recognised as contributing [to local men's well-being] and therefore, people have a desire to support it." (SA shed member)*

New Themes

Five new themes not previously described in the literature emerged from the qualitative analysis; two of the five *(leadership* and *capacity)* were prominent themes:

- *External input*: a *product* theme referring to health professionals accessing the shed by invitation of the shed or bringing a patient/client to the shed for therapeutic purposes.
- *Leadership*: a prominent *price* theme recognising that having good leadership is an incentive for men to invest in the shed.
- *Structure*: a *price* theme acknowledging that a benefit of sheds is that they provide structure to the week.

- *Community cohesion*: a *price* theme whereby participants recognised value in older and younger men working together in terms of breaking down community barriers and the opportunity to teach or mentor others.

- *Capacity*: a prominent *place* theme that refers to the shed being of sufficient size, with adequate plant and equipment, and workshop and social spaces to allow for a range of activities and a relatively large member base.

DISCUSSION

The findings from this study support the hypothesis that the core 4Ps of the social marketing framework may present a conceptual framework to explain the success of men's sheds, in particular, what attracts men to sheds, what men value in being part of their shed community, and what benefits men derive from them. Men's sheds appear to be a generator of social capital benefiting members and their wider networks (Golding, Foley, & Brown, 2007). Social capital refers *"... to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them"* (de Hart & Dekker, 2003). Diener and Seligman suggest that people prosper where social capital is high, where there is trust, where people are mutually helpful, and there are high rates of voluntary and club membership, and social entertaining (Diener & Seligman, 2004:6). Communities possessing these characteristics have higher rates of well-being.

The FS scale results bear this out. The scale, developed by Diener (Diener et al, 2010) to measure social-psychological prosperity, demonstrated an improvement in the measure of collective well-being after joining a shed at least for the Australian sample; for the UK sample, a difference in the before and after results was not apparent. This may be due to the small UK sample size or other factors, for example, a difference in the socio-economic profile of the participants in the UK (interviewees mainly white collar background) to those in Australia (mainly trades backgrounds).

While the FS suggests that sheds may improve well-being, the 4PIA tool helps to understand the factors influencing this outcome. The analysis of interviews identified elements that corresponded to all but one of the component themes of the 4Ps, *product, price, place* and *promotion* as well as several additional themes not described previously. This outcome gives support to the hypothesis that social marketing as a conceptual framework may provide an

explanation of the success of men's sheds, in that a 4P mix can be constructed to contain components likely to attract the target segment.

The *product* component of the 4Ps describes the attributes of a health intervention that encourage behavioural change and improved health outcomes. Thematic characteristics of *product* discerned from the literature review were *socialising, relaxing, self-worth, beneficence* and *support* (Ballinger et al, 2009; Cordier & Wilson, 2014; Davidson et al, 2003; Moriarty, 2005). Shed participation resulted in respondents feeling useful, experiencing peer support, being helpful to others, including their wider community, as well as providing opportunities for relaxation, socialisation and camaraderie. Previous studies have also described sheds as offering relief from social isolation, providing peer support as well as tangible benefit to individuals and community (Cordier & Wilson, 2014; Golding, 2011; Misan & Sergeant, 2009; Moylan et al, 2015; Wilson & Cordier, 2013).

The 4P *price* component considers factors that motivate the target to invest (time, energy, social and psychological cost) in the intervention. Of the 4PIA price components, the key emergent themes were: *familiarity* (being in an environment they felt comfortable in), *humour*, and *affinity* (friendships/liking others). Such environments are reflective of wider men's health literature concerning attributes increasing the likelihood of men accessing support services (Conrad & White, 2007:22-26, 165-166). The sheds in this study offered a shared interest in manual craft skills, in a setting with which was familiar and comfortable, and that promoted communication in a common, often humorous vernacular.

Place refers to the setting components of an intervention that increase the likelihood that the target segment will engage with it and so is conducive to the target segment's investment in the intervention. Of the 4PIA *place* themes, *reception* and *purpose* were prominent themes. *Reception* refers to a prospective shed member's initial encounter with a shed and its influence on their decision to join. Participants reported that the welcoming, informal nature of the sheds as key factors motivating their attendance. This corresponds with studies describing older men being attracted to less formal environments than those found for example, in statutory health services, or training centres (Cross, 2007; Davidson et al, 2003; Golding, 2006). *Purpose* refers to what happens at the shed and the activities available. This was important for study participants who were interested in the practical skills environment that sheds offered. Non-trade type

activity, for example computer workshops, increased the appeal of sheds to those less interested in in construction projects.

Promotion, the final component of the 4Ps, is integral to the success of a health intervention. The 4PIA promotion themes of *information*, *advertising*, *media*, and *identification* were all evident from interviews. Information about sheds was more often available through more traditional, DIY channels including leaflets, local newsletters and newspapers, sources familiar to older readers. Participants reported being more likely to produce or access information using pre- digital-age media rather than digital media for which many were reluctant or non-users. This is consistent with studies describing some seniors as late adopters of technology compared to younger generations and being less likely to use modern media as information sources (Hanson, 2010; Lee & Coughlin, 2015; Smith, 2014).

Using 'men's shed' as part of each shed name was deemed important for *identification* or branding purposes, conveying purpose and expectation, thus enabling sheds to its consumer segment (Lefebvre, 2011). The use of branding pertinent to the target segment is consistent with social marketing customer orientation criteria. Affiliation with sheds as an authentic community brand may reflect participant perceptions as active contributors to their communities as well as challenging views of older men in decline. In this way participants both invest in their sheds and also 'build the brand' (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 1997).

Five new themes emerged that were not included in the 4PIA or immediately evident from the literature. *Professional input*, which we have deemed a *product* theme, may be a selling factor for sheds. All study sheds received input from health professionals, either where professionals brought men to sheds as a therapeutic measure or provided health information or health check sessions. While promoting sheds a health intervention might be attractive for some, several commentators suggest that this might deter others as addressing health issues by an indirect 'health by stealth' approach might be a preferred approach for older men (Milligan et al, 2015; Milligan et al, 2012; Wilson & Cordier, 2013)

Leadership was a new *price* theme that emerged from the analysis. This refers to the importance shed members placed upon leadership and management to provide vision, and direction in order to maintain, sustain, and develop shed activities and address administrative, contractual, financial, and health and safety issues. *Structure*, another new *price* theme refers to

participants commenting that knowing shed opening times enables them to structure their week, a factor that may have relevance for retired men used to patterns of working life. A third new *price* theme was *community cohesion,* referring to positive experiences resulting from intergenerational activity. Examples included older men mentoring school students, disengaged youth, unemployed men or young people with learning disabilities.

A new *place* theme was *capacity,* referring to the need for adequate space and infrastructure to make the shed more amenable to potential members. Barriers described to shed operation include lack of space, limited opening times, lack of skilled supervisors, and/or insufficient funds. The need for more space is a common refrain from men's sheds since larger sheds can accommodate more members, offer separate work and socialisation spaces, and more activities, increasing appeal to a wider cohort (Misan, 2008). For most sheds in this study, capacity was restricted by the size of venue, coordinator time and funding.

A related *place* theme described previously is *timing* with participants commenting that extended opening hours would increase shed membership. Only one study shed was open five days a week, two sheds were open in the afternoon for one day a week, and the fourth shed open two days a week (with a third separate day for military veterans). Sheds opening more frequently had more members.

Some of the themes in the 4PIA were interlinked or related and the nuanced difference between some themes (e.g. between socialising and relaxing) and men's own interpretation of these when being interviewed may mean that some themes have greater prominence than could be extracted using the 4PIA tool. The tool may require refining to address this and other emerging themes.

While the study identified themes not previously described, the study was not exhaustive in this regard. The research considered specifically to what extent the core 4Ps concept could help explain the success of men's sheds. Whilst the core 4Ps are the foundation of any social marketing mix and provided the basis for this research, it is acknowledged that other marketing 'Ps' can be added to the mix as appropriate to an intervention; for example *policy* (local and national), *purse-strings* (how will the intervention be funded and sustained), and *people* (training provided to agents of the intervention). Finally, the study only included men who were actively participating in their shed; men who are not shed members or who had left sheds were

not consulted. This may have limited information regarding barriers and enabling factors influencing men's investment in sheds.

Reported barriers to shed participation were few apart from the desire by some sheds for more space and extended opening times. For smaller sheds offering limited activities, a lack of interest in those activities offered might act as a barrier to participation. Correspondingly noise, earthy banter and limited trade skills might be off-putting for those not familiar with a workshop-type environment.

STUDY LIMITATIONS

Study limitations include the small sample size, particularly for the UK sample and the reliance on participant recollection of their well-being when completing the pre-shed FS survey questions. However, considering the qualitative nature of the study and its exploratory character, this is not necessarily inhibitory. The limited number of sheds involved however does limit generalisability of the 'proof' of the hypothesis, which requires further sampling to refine the 4PIA framework.

CONCLUSION

Sheds appear to be generators of social capital benefiting members and their networks. Participants describe sheds as positive, supportive, male-friendly spaces with amenities, tools, and equipment that promote coming together to undertake a variety of activities. Enabling factors for participation are the company of other men, the informality of setting, central location, ease of access, the welcoming and familiar atmosphere, availability of tools and equipment, broad range of activities, regular opening times, as well as sound leadership combined with camaraderie, and peer support. Benefits described include reduced social isolation, improved social and emotional well-being, renewed sense of identity, purpose, and productivity together with a feeling of belonging to something worthwhile, and actively contributing to the community. Non-electronic media and promotional materials are preferred for branding purposes, importantly promoting sheds as spaces for men. Reported barriers to shed operation include lack of space, restricted opening times, limited funding and a dearth of skilled supervisory personnel.

The above attributes align well with the social marketing mix of core 4Ps constructed for the study which promoted a health improving initiative targeting older men. Emergent themes from interviews accounted for all but one of the 19 components comprising the 4P framework initially proposed. Five additional themes were identified which offer additional insight into future social marketing frameworks.

As a result, the authors believe this study supports the hypothesis that social marketing may present a conceptual framework to explain the success of men's sheds, in particular, what attracts men to sheds, what men value in being part of their shed community, and what benefits men derive from them. More research involving larger and more diverse samples may now be warranted to explore further social marketing benchmarking criteria that relate to men's sheds as well as other community-based health improvement initiatives targeting older men..

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AUTHOR PROFILES

Gary Misan is Adjunct Associate Professor and Senior Research Fellow with The Adelaide University Rural Clinical School. His research interests include men's sheds, male health, male health policy, and health program evaluation. He is an accomplished woodworker, inaugural President of the Whyalla Men's Shed and a founding member of the South Australian Men's Shed Association as well as a member of several Men's Health organisations. **Contact details**: gmisan@internode.on.net

Paul Hopkins is a Visiting Fellow of the University of Gloucestershire. His academic interests include the use of social marketing methodology to inform the development of male-friendly services. He is a Director of a not-for-profit company, Mengage and has an extensive background in developing practice based work with boys and men in Health Promotion, Public Health, and charitable work.

Contact details: info@mengage.co.uk, phopkins@glos.ac.uk