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Home > Lifestyle > Men > Thinking Man

# NHS rules on single sex wards lead to discrimination against men with eating disorders



Dave Chawner has spoken about his experiences with anorexia CREDIT: OSCAR HOLM

By **Laura Donnelly**, HEALTH EDITOR

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Dr Akiria Fukutomi, lead researcher, from Vincent Square Eating Disorder Service, run by Central and North West London Foundation trust, said: “The single-sex system disadvantages males as the majority of the patients are female.

“The fact that both professionals and patients believe eating disorder wards should be open to males, should spur units to accept males if they do not currently do so.

The researcher said the Government guidelines have been amended following the study, to allow mixed sex wards under particular conditions -such as keeping sleeping areas and bathrooms separate.

Andrew Radford, chief executive of charity Beat said, “We need to remove the barriers that can prevent men and boys from accessing treatment, by raising awareness and ensuring services are accessible and have enough resources to provide help.”

So excited my book “Weight Expectations” is out TODAY! It’s all about my experience of [#anorexia](#) ([https://twitter.com/hashtag/anorexia?src=hash&ref\\_src=twsrc%5Etfw](https://twitter.com/hashtag/anorexia?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)) & [#eatingdisorders](#) ([https://twitter.com/hashtag/eatingdisorders?src=hash&ref\\_src=twsrc%5Etfw](https://twitter.com/hashtag/eatingdisorders?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw))...but I promise it’s not some pity party. <https://t.co/sy5efkuOvo> (<https://t.co/sy5efkuOvo>)

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— Dave Chawner (@DaveChawner) [June 21, 2018](https://twitter.com/DaveChawner/status/1009700049398452224?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) ([https://twitter.com/DaveChawner/status/1009700049398452224?ref\\_src=twsrc%5Etfw](https://twitter.com/DaveChawner/status/1009700049398452224?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw))

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**M**en with eating disorders are suffering discrimination because of NHS same sex ward rules, research suggests.

A study of 26 UK hospitals treating the condition found four had stopped admitting male patients entirely, in a bid to comply with Department of Health guidelines.

The rules, drawn up in 2010, say male and female patients should not be housed on the same wards, in a bid to protect patient dignity.

But the new study suggests that men suffering from eating disorders are getting worse access to care, because hospitals are prioritising single sex wards for female patients.

Men make up an estimated 25 per cent of the 1.25 million people with an eating disorder within the UK.

But on average, male sufferers will wait nearly three times as long female sufferers to be even referred for treatment.

The research, published in the British Journal of Psychiatry, also found that nine in ten patients with eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia were in favour of mixed sex wards.

**My Battle With Anorexia | Dave Chawner | TEDxClapham**



Patients told researchers that all-female wards could encourage “competitive” tendencies - which could be lethal among those with such conditions.