

Farmers aren't seeking help for mental health: Their partners tell us why

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INTRODUCTION

- Queensland farmers suicide rate twice that of metropolitan population (Arnautovska et al., 2014).
- Many factors place demand on farmers (e.g. finances, economics, weather and isolation) and may be distressing (Hossain, Eley, Coutts, & Gorman, 2008).
- Mental health help-seeking is reportedly lacking in farmers and it is unclear why.
- Mental health help-seeking is seeking help from health professionals for issues relating to mental health or distress (Rickwood & Thomas, 2012).
- Farmers' partners may have roles in mental health help-seeking such as facilitation and support.
- This research utilised farmers' partners insight to explore the barriers and facilitators of mental health help-seeking in farmers.



METHOD

- Partners of QLD farmers
- Qualitative
- Semi-structured interviews (N=10)
- Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

RESULTS & CONCLUSION

Weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weather, especially the current drought, is a large source of farmers' stress, influencing their business and finances.
Finances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finances are a major stressor for farmers and may also have a role in preventing mental health help-seeking. • "The fact that if they have had to go, say 500km to get mental health assistance, that's a financial burden." [Albert, F].
Farming Life/Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers are time poor, production and business are their priority. • Farming is a lifestyle and way of life, that is ingrained in their identity. • Farming culture may benefit the business, but also potentially prevents mental health help-seeking.
Mental health literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers' mental health knowledge is slowly improving, although their understanding is often lacking. • Farmers are poor at recognising mental health issues within themselves, and are often unable unwilling to acknowledge they need to seek help
Stigma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed reports regarding prevalence of stigma and different types such as self-stigma and public stigma. • Stigma of mental-illness as well as stigma of mental health help-seeking reported to have influence. • "I guess that falls under the stigma umbrella too. I mean they wouldn't want to be seen walking in to the psychologist's clinic" [Susan, F]
Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The support that farmers receive from their partners is important and has the possibility to prevent or facilitate mental health help-seeking. • Mental health help-seeking can be facilitated by the partner, such as indicating the need to seek help, or attending the appointment.
Coping Mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A variety of coping mechanism (positive and negative) are used including: withdrawing, working more, drinking alcohol, taking a break and using humour. • Coping mechanisms may reduce the need to seek help for mental health or alternatively, prevent mental health help-seeking with no reduction in distress.
Health Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many issues surround the provision of health services for farmers, which may influence their mental health help-seeking • Issues reported: availability and access, continuity of care, confidentiality, privacy, farmer's relationship with practitioner, distrust of medical care and preference for 'bush' practitioners.
Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers partners offer valuable insight in to the mental health help-seeking of farmers • The findings allow further research on the relative influence of these factors on mental health help-seeking