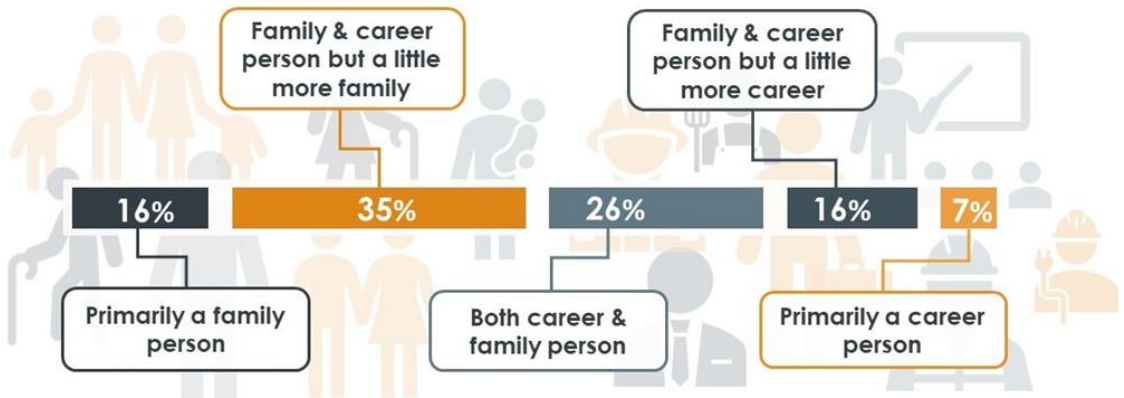




Family or career? Which way do MAPP participants lean?



YOUR INFORMATION MATTERS

In Australia, and around the world, men's mental health is increasingly gaining attention and MAPP is making an important contribution. In 2019, the Australian Government launched its [National Men's Health Strategy for 2020-2030](#). To inform the strategy, the Commonwealth Department of Health has asked MAPP's chief investigator, Dr Jacqui Macdonald, to lead a review of the scientific literature on barriers to health system access for men and boys. We will update you on this in 2020.



MAPP participants provide vital information on life's challenges and mental health risks for adult Australian men. For example, the information that MAPP participants give us about their sleep (or problems with sleep!) has been analysed in a national collaboration with the Australian Fatherhood Research Consortium. **We have clear evidence of the link between mental health risk, stress and sleep disturbance for fathers of infants and toddlers.** This evidence is a critical piece of information in helping us to identify new dads in need of support.

These are just two examples of how the MAPP team links our study findings to government and services to improve opportunities and support for men (both fathers and non-fathers).

MEN WHO CHOOSE TO REMAIN CHILDLESS



In 2019, MAPP researchers were among the first in Australia to examine why **some men at the peak age for first-time fatherhood were choosing not to have children.**

Lead researcher, Imogene Smith, conducted in-depth interviews with 11 men who told us in their online survey that they did not want children 'at all'. Some were single, most were in straight or same-sex relationships.

Some men felt they had always known that they would not have children while others felt they had not yet arrived at a definitive choice.

Most of the men in relationships had not yet had a 'serious conversation' about their decision to not have children, but they acknowledged that talking about it was something they 'should do'.

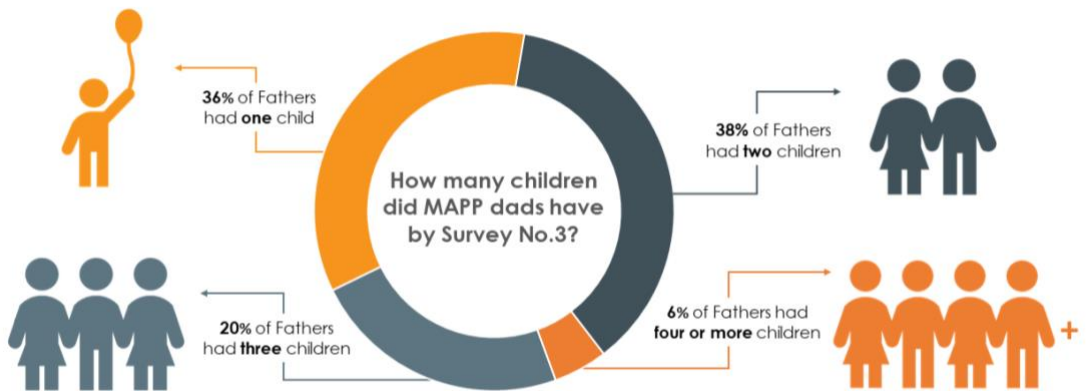
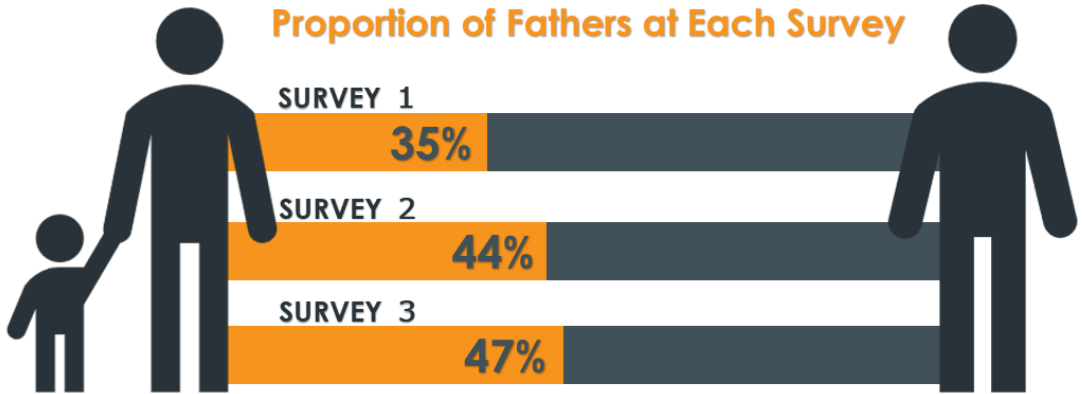
The men often saw **being childless as part of their identity of being unconventional or different, and challenging social norms.** Other reasons for men not wanting to have children included a loss of freedom and increased responsibility, perceiving negative experiences in friends and family, influence from a partner, and also concern over the state of the world, particularly issues like climate change and overpopulation. In previous decades it was assumed that men in relationships would have children, but that's changing. **Recent estimates show that up to 10 per cent of Australian men are intentionally childless.** The research article, '[When men choose to be childless: an interpretative phenomenological analysis](#)' was published in a recent edition of the *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*.

Media on this study:

- [The Saturday Paper](#)
- [Australian Men's Health Forum](#)
- [Radio interview with ABC Melbourne's David Astle](#)
- [The Fatherhood Blog](#)
- [Radio interview on ABC with Hillary Harper](#)
- [Channel 9's Today Show \(Sunday\)](#)

TRACKING THE TRANSITION INTO FATHERHOOD

Proportion of Fathers at Each Survey



DADS AND INFANT DISTRESS

Babies cry as a way to communicate their needs and wishes to parents and caregivers. Parents' minds are primed to respond to a crying baby; however, **it can be difficult to understand exactly what a baby is trying to communicate.**

When an unsettled infant continues to cry despite all efforts to console it, it is common for parents to feel frustrated or distressed. Sometimes it is 2am and nothing seems to work.

The infant's cry can add to the stress of **disrupted sleep, changed routines and adjustment to the new role of fatherhood. It can be challenging when all this is going on to respond sensitively to a baby's needs.**

In 2020, the MAPP team will begin an investigation into infant crying, and fathers' neurological responses when a baby is distressed.



What's next for The MAPP Study



In 2019, we **completed data collection for MAPP's 3rd annual survey**. This means we can now begin to explore patterns in men's moods, their stress, relationships with partners and children, work challenges and successes, and activities with friends.

In 2020, one of our key investigations will be into the combinations of **strategies that men use to cope with stress**. This study will be led by Jules Livingston, a MAPP team member training to be a Clinical Psychologist. Some men cope by seeking help or looking for solutions to problems. Others avoid or seek distractions from problems. Many men use a combination of strategies which may depend on the type of stress they face. We will identify the coping patterns that men adopt and how useful they are in alleviating stress.

While we're busy analysing the data from the first 3 surveys, our participants will continue to complete either their 4th or 5th survey. **For many participants 2020 will be their final year in the study**. We are hugely grateful to our participants and we will continue to keep you informed on the information we gather and our efforts to build awareness and support for men's health.

MAPP PARTICIPANTS: UPDATE YOUR DETAILS

Your Involvement in the MAPP study is unique and irreplaceable!

Please keep us up to date with your best contact details.



To update your details, **fill in our online form**:
<http://mappresearch.org/participants>

Or, contact the research team via:

Phone: 03 9244 3820

Email: mapp@deakin.edu.au

