

New Study Reveals That Marriage Is Good for Your Heart

Although through the years there have been many jokes about marriage, a new study says living with a married partner may help ward off heart disease and stroke, according to the news agency AFP.

Researchers combing through 20 years of data on more than two million people, aged 42 to 77, found that being married significantly reduced the risk of both afflictions.

Their findings were recently published in the medical journal *Heart*.

The study examined ethnically varied populations in Europe, North America, the Middle East and Asia.

Compared to married people, the divorced, widowed or never married were 42 percent more likely to develop cardiovascular disease and 16 percent more likely to have coronary heart disease, the study found.

The risk of dying was likewise elevated for the non-married, by 42 percent from coronary heart disease and by 55 percent from stroke.

The results were nearly the same for men and women, except for stroke, to which men were more susceptible.

“These findings may suggest that marital status should be considered in the risk assessment for cardiovascular disease,” concluded a team led by Chun Wai Wong, a researcher at Royal Stoke Hospital’s department of cardiology in Stoke-on-Trent in Britain wrote in the journal article.

Four-fifths of all cardiovascular disease can be attributed to a proven set of “risk factors”: advanced age, being a man, high-blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking and diabetes, according to the article.

Marriage, in other words, could be an important share of the missing 20 percent.

Because the study was observational rather than based on a controlled experiment, the researchers noted no clear conclusions could be drawn as to cause and effect.

That leaves open the question of why marriages may be “protective.”

“There are various theories,” the researchers said in a statement.

Having someone around to take care of one’s health problems and keep track of one’s meds is probably a plus, as are two incomes or pensions instead of one.

More intangibly, not living alone is thought to be good for morale and for neural stimulation. People living in couples, earlier research has shown, also have lower rates of dementia.
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