

# Married women less likely to die from heart disease

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(Medical Xpress)—Married women are 28% less likely to die from heart disease than unmarried women, a new study has found. This is despite the fact that marriage makes no difference to women's chances of developing heart disease in the first place.

The reasons for this difference are not known, but Dr Sarah Floud and colleagues at Oxford University's Cancer Epidemiology Unit suggest one explanation could be that the partners of married women may encourage them to seek early medical treatment for symptoms.

The researchers say there may be other possible explanations too. For example, other studies have shown that partners tend to encourage their spouses to take medication and make changes in unhealthy lifestyles.

The findings come from the latest analysis of data from a large UK study of women's health run by Oxford University researchers, the Million Women Study.

This new study, published in the journal *BMC Medicine*, included 730,000 women who were on average 60 years old. Over a nine-year period,

30,000 of these women developed [heart disease](#) and 2,000 died from the condition.

The researchers found that married women, or those living with a partner, had the same risk of developing heart disease as unmarried women (this included single, widowed and divorced women). But the chance of dying from heart disease was 28% lower.

The study took many factors into account that could have influenced the results, such as age, socio-economic status and lifestyle, but the lower risk of death from heart disease remained.

Dr Floud says: 'Married women were no less likely to develop heart disease than women who were not married, but they were less likely to die from it.'

'This means that, over 30 years, about three in 100 [married women](#) would die from heart disease compared with about four in 100 women who are not married or living with a partner.'

**More information:** The complete study is available online: [www.biomedcentral.com/1741-7015/12/42](http://www.biomedcentral.com/1741-7015/12/42)

Provided by Oxford University

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