The death of a lover CAN actually ‘break your heart’, science reveals

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Tuesday 5 Apr 2016 4:17 pm

There we were thinking that the idea of a ‘broken heart’ was something that only happened in the first half of rom-coms, before Jennifer Aniston arrives.

But no – it’s cold, hard fact.

People who lose a partner are at an increased risk of developing an irregular heartbeat, the new study has found.

The condition, known as atrial fibrillation, is itself a risk factor for stroke and heart failure.

Researchers said the risk appears to be greatest in younger people after the death of their loved one.

The risk also increases when loss is least expected, they added.

Danish researchers collated data from almost 89,000 people diagnosed with atrial fibrillation between 1995 and 2014 and compared it to 886,000 healthy people.

The study, published in the journal Open Heart, found that the risk was highest eight to 14 days after the loss.

‘The loss of a partner is considered one of the most severely stressful life events and is likely to affect most people, independently of coping mechanisms,’ they wrote.

‘In this large population-based study, the severely stressful life event of losing a partner was associated with a transiently increased risk of atrial fibrillation, which lasted for about one year.

‘The elevated risk was especially high for those who were young and those who lost a relatively healthy partner.

‘Bereavement is a major life event, which is known to increase the risk of cardiovascular disease, mental illness and death.’

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