**Loneliness & social isolation may lead to increased risk of heart disease**

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20 Apr, 2016, 03.09PM IST

NEW YORK: Many of us feel lonely at certain times but loneliness and social isolation for a longer period of time may lead to increased risk of stroke or heart disease, find researchers.   
  
The findings showed that loneliness and social isolation was associated with a 29 percent increased risk of a heart or angina attack and a 32 percent heightened risk of having a stroke.

"It suggests that addressing loneliness and social isolation may have an important role in the prevention of two of the leading causes of morbidity in high-income countries," said researchers from York, Liverpool and Newcastle universities.   
  
The study, involving more than 1,81,000 adults, included 4,628 coronary heart disease "events" -- heart attacks, angina and death -- and 3,002 strokes recorded during monitoring periods ranging from three to 21 years. 

The results back public health concerns about the importance of social contacts for health and well-being.   
  
"But one of the greatest challenges will be how to design effective interventions to boost social connections, taking account of technology," the authors pointed out in a paper published online in the journal Heart.   
  
"Further attention to social connections is needed in research and public health surveillance, prevention and intervention efforts," they noted. 