**Give your heart some good company, it doesn’t like being lonely**

* **ANI, Washington**

 |

* Updated: Apr 21, 2016 12:49 IST

The many joys of being alone are not very healthy, according to a recent research, which claims that loneliness and isolation can put your heart at risk.

The study links loneliness and social isolation to around a 30% increased risk of having a stroke or developing coronary artery disease, the two leading causes of illness and death in high income countries.

The findings indicate that the size of the effect is comparable to that of other recognised risk factors, such as anxiety and a stressful job.

Loneliness has already been linked to a compromised immune system, high blood pressure, and ultimately, premature death, but it’s not clear what impact it might have on heart disease and stroke risk.

The researchers trawled 16 research databases for relevant studies, published up to May 2015, and found 23 that were eligible.

|  |
| --- |
|  |
|  |

These studies, which involved more than 1,81,000 adults, included 4,628 coronary heart disease events (heart attacks, angina attacks, death) and 3,002 strokes recorded during monitoring periods ranging from three to 21 years.

The researchers claimed that this is an observational study, so no firm conclusions can be drawn about cause and effect, added to which the researchers point out that it wasn’t possible to exclude the potential impact of other unmeasured factors or reverse causation whereby those with undiagnosed disease were less sociable, so inflating the findings.

They claimed that their work 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.

The study appears in the journal Heart.