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August 17, 2011 Wednesday 12:01 AM GMT

Stressed-out **partner** can lead to early death;   
Having a stressed-out **partner** can send you to an early grave, even if you used to be laid-back yourself.  
  
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**LENGTH:** 319 words

Research on birds has found that those paired off with anxious **partners** were at a high risk of dying young.

Academics suggest this could be because it is "not very comforting" to live with someone who has grown up "jittery".

Prof Pat Monaghan of the University of Glasgow said: "The take-home message is that the wrong kind of **partner** can be very bad for your health.

"Other research led us to expect that increased **stress** exposure in **early life** would reduce adult lifespan, but we were not expecting such a big effect on breeding **partners.**

"Unstressed birds had mortality rates that were four times higher than normal if they were simply given **partners** that had experienced **stress** earlier in their lives."

In the experiment, published in the leading science journal Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences, researchers studied zebra finches since they form strong bonds with mates and respond to **stress** in the same way as humans.

They gave half the birds in the study **stress** hormones for two weeks when they were chicks, then raised all of the birds in **stress**-free environments.

Those exposed to **stress** in **early life** were later found to be much more sensitive to it as adults compared with the "laid-back" finches, which is likely to be bad for the health.

The birds were then given mates and their lifespans were monitored.

Those that had been stressed-out as chicks had far shorter lives, as did their **partners** even if they themselves had enjoyed a relaxed start in life.

Prof Monaghan said: "What we found is that the effect is contagious, but only when the exposure to **stress** comes early in life.

"If you extrapolate this to humans, you could hypothesize that during the recession, for instance, someone who suffered **stress** as an infant may feel the problems more. And this would be bad news for their **partner.**

"Birds, like humans, are monogamous creatures and also respond to **stress** in a very similar way."