

Loneliness is becoming a big danger to health

8th August, 2017



New research suggests that loneliness and social isolation may increase the risk of dying early by 50 per cent. The research is from Brigham Young University in the USA. Researchers

tried to find out how loneliness affected the risk of early death. They said loneliness can occur even if people are surrounded by family and friends. Researchers also looked at the dangers to health of social isolation. This is when people have little or no contact with others. The research showed that the risk of premature death was 50 per cent lower for adults who mixed with friends and family. Researchers found that loneliness, social isolation, and living alone were all associated with an increased risk of early death.

The researchers added that loneliness, social isolation, and living alone could be more dangerous than obesity. Professor Julianne Holt-Lunstad said the results of her research are worrying because the population is aging. She said: "Many nations around the world now suggest we are facing a 'loneliness epidemic'. The challenge we face now is what can be done about it." She suggested that one way to help with this problem is to teach social skills to children in schools. She also said doctors should talk more about loneliness to their patients. In addition, she said people should prepare for their old age social life like they take out pensions to prepare for their financial future.

Sources: medicalnewstoday.com / psychcentral.com / telegraph.co.uk

Writing

We all have a duty to make sure others aren't lonely. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

research / isolation / dying / loneliness / surrounded / contact / risk / living alone / dangerous / obesity / aging / epidemic / social skills / patients / old age / pension

True / False

- Research suggests loneliness raises the risk of an early death by 50%. T / F
- Research says people are not lonely when with family and friends. T / F
- Researchers did not look at the effects of social isolation. T / F
- Researchers said living alone did not lead to loneliness. T / F
- The research said loneliness was more dangerous than obesity. T / F
- Many countries suggested there was a loneliness epidemic. T / F
- A professor said doctors should talk to patients about loneliness. T / F
- The professor said a pension would help with loneliness in our old age. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| 1. suggests | a. hazardous |
| 2. risk | b. happen |
| 3. occur | c. get ready |
| 4. premature | d. related |
| 5. associated | e. problem |
| 6. dangerous | f. shows |
| 7. worrying | g. furthermore |
| 8. challenge | h. untimely |
| 9. in addition | i. chance |
| 10. prepare | j. concerning |

Discussion – Student A

- What do you think about loneliness?
- How lonely do you get?
- What does loneliness do to people?
- How can we help people who are lonely?
- What do you do when you get lonely?
- How does the Internet make people lonelier?
- Will we become lonelier in the future?
- What should governments do to reduce loneliness?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1. increase the risk of dying early | a. are worrying |
| 2. surrounded | b. death |
| 3. the dangers to health | c. to their patients |
| 4. the risk of premature | d. than obesity |
| 5. associated with an increased | e. of social isolation |
| 6. could be more dangerous | f. by 50 per cent |
| 7. the results of her research | g. for their financial future |
| 8. we are facing a | h. risk of early death |
| 9. doctors should talk more about loneliness | i. 'loneliness epidemic' |
| 10. they take out pensions to prepare | j. by family |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- How would loneliness affect you?
- Why might loneliness be more dangerous than obesity?
- What might happen in a 'loneliness epidemic'?
- What social skills should children learn about loneliness?
- How can doctors help their patients with loneliness?
- How could people prepare for their old-age social life?
- What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

Spelling

- social nlaiootis
- cresinae the risk of dying early
- roudreusnd by family and friends
- little or no ntaoctt with others
- the risk of umrrpatea death
- were all asscedoiat with an...
- more dangerous than iyetbso
- the ltnaoiupop is aging
- we are facing a loneliness cieeimpd
- She setdgugse that
- they take out niopssne
- prepare for their icnalinfa future

Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. i	3. b	4. h	5. d
6. a	7. j	8. e	9. g	10. c

Role Play

Role A – Doctors

You think doctors are the best people to help with loneliness. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their forms of help. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): neighbours, social media or you.

Role B – Neighbours

You think neighbours are the best people to help with loneliness. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their forms of help. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): doctors, social media or you.

Role C – Social Media

You think social media is the best way to help with loneliness. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their forms of help. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): neighbours, doctors or you.

Role D – Yourself

You think you are the best people to help with loneliness. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their forms of help. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): neighbours, social media or doctors.

Speaking – Help

Rank these with your partner. Put the people who can best help others with loneliness at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| • friends | • family |
| • co-workers | • doctors |
| • social media | • neighbours |
| • yourself | • local community |

Answers – True False

a	T	b	F	c	F	d	F	e	T	f	T	g	T	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.