



MARRIAGE AND HEALTH

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ABSTRACT

Marriage as a source of both happiness and conflict remains in the limelight of the society. In order to explore the effects of marriage on spouse's mental and physical health, a number of prominent studies were reviewed and analysed by the author of this paper. At last, it was found that men and women both can add years to their life in happy marriage. Marriage can even lower the risk of many disease but the main beneficiary from the happy marriage is a Man, about 5 times more than a woman. On the other hand, women are main loser in unhappy marriage because women experience more stress than men in bad marriage.

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INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a legally or formally recognised Union between a man and a woman. The union is for meeting the sexual and emotional needs of the men and women. Marriage is a very important event in one's life because it can lead to a happy and lovely life but it can also end up as a stressful situation fighting all the time. Some prominent studies have been analysed so that the effects of marriage on the overall health of the couples could be explored.

Objective

The objective of the present study is to know the effect of Marriage on the overall health of Man and Woman.

METHOD

In order to estimate the effect of Marriage on the overall health of Man and Woman, prominent studies between 2000 and 2007, after screening on the basis of title and/or abstract were analysed and reviewed.

Review of Studies

Orth Gomer K *et al.* (2000) reported in the study of nearly 300 women with heart disease that marital stress by-itself can triple the risk of heart surgery, heart attack or even death in the ensuing 5 years [1].

In a remarkable study of 189 men and women with congestive heart failure undertaken by Coyne J C *et al.* (2001) found that survival depended just as much on the quality of the marriage as the severity of the disease. Repeating a common finding, this study also reported encourage marital quality had a larger impact on women than on men [2].

Robles T F and J K Kiecolt Glaser (2003) reported in their study that marriage can increase the longevity of the people [3]. The simple act of being married can even lower the risk of many diseases such as cancer, high blood pressure, heart disease and flu [3]. Caring and loving spouses regularly encourage each other to choose a Healthy lifestyle [3]. They do so by encouraging to eat right, exercise and take vacations [3]. Close, supportive and loving companionship acts like a buffer against stress and all its related physical and emotional implications [3].

Conversely, unhappy and unmatching marriages can be very harmful for partners [3]. They found in their study that the impact of marital stress on health is similar in magnitude to more traditional risk factors just like physical inactivity and smoking [3].

In the same study it was found that men are the main beneficiaries of marriage in terms of health [3]. However, marriage can enhance life expectancies for both partners, but this benefit is 5 times greater for men than for women [3].

Immune systems of partners are also found to be affected from marriage through the stress [3]. As reported in same study germ fighting cells tend to surrender when couples fight [3]. Surprisingly, women (and, to a lesser degree men) in unhappy

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marriages are vulnerable to infectious diseases [3]. Consequently, if any one of them have a wound it can be unusually slow to heal [3].

Umberson D and K Williams (2005) [4] found one thing in their study that is similar to the study discussed above. They reported that women are the biggest loser if marriage is unhappy [4]. But this is contingent on age factor. In Middle Age (say starting from 40 years) women feel more marital stress than men [4]. For younger couples, this gender difference is not visible [4].

Using the data from 198 couples, Guy Bodenmann *et al.* (2007) suggested that hassles and problems experienced within marriage affects the relationship satisfaction and sexual activity [5]. Link between external stress and relationships satisfaction are stronger for day to day problems than for important life events [5]. They also found that the sexual responses of maritaly dissatisfied couples who are experiencing higher levels of daily stress differs on the basis of gender. Maritaly dissatisfied women prefer less sexual activities whereas maritaly dissatisfied men want more sex [5].

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

It is clear from the results of above studies that

1. The stress arising from unhappy marriages can lead to serious physical as well as mental health problems.
2. Women are more likely to feel marital stress than men if marriage end up unhappier and unmatching one. Hence, women are biggest loser in terms of mental and physical health from unsuccessful marriages.
3. Although both partners gain good health and experience longevity from happy marriages, men are found to be more benefited upto 5 times than women from happy marriages.
4. Gender based effect of unhappy marriage is visible in middle age. Young couples experience same level of stress from unhappy marriage.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above findings it can be concluded that before tying the knot everyone should think what's really at stake. Especially for a woman an unhappy marriage is worse than no marriage at all. The stress of an unmatching or unhappy marriage can probably erase any health benefits a woman may gain from marriage.

Recommendations

On the basis of the results of above mentioned studies, it is recommended that both Man or Woman should marry wisely, work hard to resolve or minimise marital problems and avoid conflicts.

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