

Marriage is good for physical and mental health

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The 'smug marrieds' may have good reason to feel pleased with themselves as experts today confirm that long-term committed relationships are good for mental and physical health and this benefit increases over time.

In an editorial published by student *BMJ*, David and John Gallacher from Cardiff University say that on average married people live longer. They say that women in committed relationships have better [mental health](#), while men in committed relationships have better physical health, and they conclude that "on balance it probably is worth making the effort."

Men's [physical health](#) probably improves because of their partner's positive influence on their [lifestyle](#) and "the mental bonus for women may be due to a greater emphasis on the importance of the relationship", they write.

But the journey of true love does not always run smoothly, maintain the authors, pointing to evidence that relationships in adolescence are associated with increased adolescent [depressive symptoms](#).

And not all relationships are good for you, they add, referring to evidence that single people have better mental health than those in strained relationships.

They also confirm that breaking up is hard to do, saying "exiting a

relationship is distressing" and divorce can have a devastating impact on individuals. Having numerous partners is also linked with a risk of earlier death.

They conclude that while relationship failures can harm health this is not a reason to avoid them. A good relationship will improve both physical and mental health and perhaps the thing to do is to try to avoid a bad relationship rather than not getting into a relationship at all.

Provided by British Medical Journal

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