

Marriage is good for the health: global study

15 December 2009

Despite the barbs of comedians and the spectacular bust-ups documented in the gossip magazines, marriage really is good for you, international research has found.

A study of nearly 34,500 people in 15 countries found married people are less likely to suffer from depression, anxiety and substance abuse, clinical psychologist Kate Scott of New Zealand's University of Otago said Tuesday.

"What our study points to is that the marital relationship offers a lot of mental health benefits for both men and women, and that the distress and disruption associated with ending [marriage](#) can make people vulnerable to developing mental disorders," Scott said.

Being separated, divorced, or widowed is associated with increased risk of mental health disorders in both men and women, particularly with depression in men and drugs and [alcohol abuse](#) in women.

"One of the more important findings is that in recent years it has been asserted that marriage is better for men than for women in terms of mental health. This study does not agree with that position," Scott said.

"We found that compared to never getting married, getting married is good for both men and women in terms of most mental health disorders."

But the study did find that men were less likely to become depressed in their first marriage than women, and Scott said this might be due to women being more likely to follow the traditional role of a wife first time around.

Other studies have found that as gender roles have become less traditional, with women working more and becoming better educated, female depression has fallen.

The latest study also found getting married

reduced the risk of substance abuse more for women than for men.

This might be due to evidence that [women](#) cut their [alcohol consumption](#) sharply when they became pregnant and this often continued while the children were young, Scott said.

The study was based on the WHO World [Mental Health](#) surveys across developing and developed countries conducted over the past decade.

(c) 2009 AFP

APA citation: Marriage is good for the health: global study (2009, December 15) retrieved 7 May 2021 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2009-12-marriage-good-health-global.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.