

A FAIRY TALE ENDING: MARRIAGE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO HEALTH



Prince Harry and Meghan Markle share one advantage of tying the knot with all of us commoners: Marriage can impact the actual heart. (Photo by Alastair Grant – WPA Pool/Getty Images)

Once upon a time, there was a royal wedding planned between a handsome prince and a beautiful actress. In an English castle, they planned to profess their love before the whole world.

The public romance of Britain’s Prince Harry and Hollywood’s Meghan Markle may seem more fairy tale than real life, but there is one potential advantage of tying the knot that they’ll share with all of us commoners.

That’s because marriage – an affair of the heart – can impact the actual heart.

Research has shown that being married reduces the risk of death in patients with heart disease.

Marriage’s impact on the heart is apparent, according to a study published in December in the [Journal of the American Heart Association](#). It’s the first to show an association between marital status and heart disease-related death among patients with known or suspected coronary artery disease.

“I was somewhat surprised by the magnitude of the influence of being married,” said the study’s lead researcher, Dr. Arshed A. Quyyumi, co-director of the Emory Clinical Cardiovascular Research Institute at Emory University in Atlanta.

There are various reasons why marriage might make a difference, Quyyumi said.

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“Other than social support, there is some suggestion that health outcomes are improved by optimism, coping, and perhaps lower anxiety and depression. All of these things, or managing them, may be affected by being married,” he said.

“Other studies have shown that how good the marriage is can also make a difference to a couple’s health.

Most show happier marriages resulted in better health outcomes, such as fewer hospitalizations and serious diseases and. But rocky relationships don't seem to improve anything health-wise.

"While marriage has long been argued to promote health, it is not the case that any marriage is better than none," wrote sociologists Hui Liu and Linda Waite in "Bad marriage, broken heart? Age and gender differences in the link between marital quality and cardiovascular risks among older adults," published in the [Journal of Health and Social Behavior](#).

Marital happiness is not a given in any relationship, and everyone will have to wait and see how things turn out for the royal couple. It'll start with an expected 100,000 people filling the streets near Windsor Castle on Saturday.

"This wedding will be guided by tradition, allowing everyone to celebrate what makes royal weddings so special," reads a communications update from Buckingham Palace.

After the ceremony, the pair will head off in a one-horse carriage to build their own happily ever after.

The End

