

BENEFIT OF MARRIAGE

Objective: To review the medical literature evaluating traditional legal, heterosexual marriage and its impact on well-being compared to other heterosexual relationships or being single.

Methods: We reviewed studies from 1966 to the present in peer-reviewed medical literature which evaluated the benefits of legally binding, heterosexual marriage.

Results: This study included 42 articles meeting the inclusion criteria, showing a strong benefit of traditional marriage on general well-being and specific well-being related measures including physical/mental health, sexual satisfaction, family income and the happiness of children. There appeared to be a progressive trend of enhanced well-being the stronger the relationship commitment versus an unmarried status. Married couples had the highest well-being of all relationships.

Conclusion: Traditional marriage provides numerous benefits to the relationship partners through enhanced measures of mental and physical well-being compared to heterosexual partnerships or being single.

Table 1: Summary of reviewed articles

Ref #	Country	Sample	Conclusion
Longevity			
9	USA	11,112	Unmarried face substantially higher risks of dying than married.
10	Australia	889	Marriage was protective against cognitive decline in the geriatric population.
12	USA	20,245	Marriage was beneficial to survival in patients with testis cancer.
13	USA	225	Marriage was beneficial for survival in patients who received coronary artery bypass grafts.
14	USA	11,216	Married patients who had a per-cutaneous coronary surgery had better outcomes vs. unmarried.
15	USA	127,753	Married individuals had higher survival rates for colon cancer than non-married individuals.
18	USA	127,015	Marriage had no survival advantages for bladder cancer compared to non-married patients
General well-being			
11	13 EU	21,631	Married individuals had greater general health compared to the unmarried and remarried groups.
16	USA	303	Married individuals had greater life satisfaction and lower blood pressure than single individuals.
17	Morocco	185	In women with rheumatoid arthritis, married individuals had greater well-being than non-married.
25	USA	47	Cortisol elevated when married individuals were separated from each other in everyday life.
Mental health			
7	USA	1201	Young adults who become married experienced greater well-being than non-married individuals.
8	USA	6948	Married individuals had greater well-being, but less autonomy and personal growth than singles
19	USA	4331	Married fathers reported greater health and fewer mental health issues than single fathers.
20	USA	3762	Depressive symptoms were similar for married individuals and cohabitants after a relationship ended.
21	USA	1534	Divorced mothers had worse mental health than married and never-married mothers.
22	USA	3066	Depressed persons had greater mental health benefits when entering marriage than non-depressed.
26	USA	2921	Married mothers had less stress and were less likely to have depression than single mothers.

37	USA	4900	Married parents have less mental health issues than single parents.
Sexual satisfaction			
6	Norway	2101	Generally, married individuals had the best sex, followed by the cohabitating, then the non-cohabitating
23	Australia	213	Cohabitors who married reported a more equal sex interest than those who stayed unmarried.
44	USA	3432	Married individuals experienced greater emotional satisfaction with sex than non-married individuals.
Finance			
25	Germany	9089	Marriage reduces re-employment time for men only. Cohabitation increases it for both sexes.
27	USA	9356	Married individuals have a higher family income than non-married individuals.
28	USA	8326	Married individuals without children earn more than non-married individuals without children.
29	14 Countries	57,125	Married men earn 0-30% more than men who are not married.
30	USA	4700	Married fathers earned the most, followed by cohabiting fathers, then unmarried fathers.
Children			
31	USA	21,383	Divorce was associated with declines in children's achievement and adjustment levels.
32	Norway	3116	Childhood abdominal obesity was more prevalent among children of divorced parents.
33	USA	3862	Children in single-parent families had increased behavior problems and decreases in achievement.
34	USA	6361	Married mothers report greater overall health for their children compared to single mothers.
35	USA	1261	Children from divorced families experienced a higher risk of premature mortality across their life span.
36	USA	958	Marriage after childbirth increases a child's early cognitive performance.
Volunteering and donations			
38	USA	2553	Married individuals are more likely to volunteer vs. single individuals and cohabitating individuals.
39	USA	37,426	Single women volunteer the greater amount. Married individuals volunteer more than single men.
40	USA	912	Marriage had no effect on volunteering.
41	USA	124	Married individuals were most likely to donate. Marriage made no difference in time spent volunteering.
Miscellaneous			
42	USA	5500	Married individuals experience less physical violence than their cohabitating counterparts.
43	USA	13,017	Marriage increases church attendance. Cohabitation decreases church attendance.

This is internal data, under review for publication in peer-reviewed journal. Please do not distribute without permission from Teleios, Inc.