

Is love medicine?

If loneliness kills, marriage reduces heart disease and a broken heart is a recognized medical condition, then love may be a stronger medicine than many drugs.

JACKSON, WYOMING, USA, February 14, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Broken heart has been recognized as a legitimate medical syndrome for nearly 30 years, and just last year studies found that loneliness increases the risk of heart disease similar to high blood pressure, smoking and obesity, and that married people have lower rates of heart disease overall. According to Dr. Mark Menolascino, MD Medical Director of the Meno Clinic for Functional Medicine, the conclusions of these studies clearly indicate that it is time to recognize love as a powerful medicine and that social support should be included in heart disease risk assessments.

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Dr. Mark Menolascino MD, MS, ABIHM, ABAARM, IFMCP

In his clinic, Dr. Menolascino's prescriptions for all patients include ways to integrate love and social support, often

alongside exercise, nutritional supplements, and pharmaceuticals. He recalls that in his early years as a doctor, people in the Wyoming ski resort community of Jackson Hole where he practices laughed at his prescriptions. However, evidence is mounting that love is indeed a powerful driver of health, and now many people are realizing that his prescriptions for personalized nutrition, exercise, stress relief, social support and love are good medicine.

Dr. Menolascino recalls the event that made him realize the power of love as a medical force: “When I was a medical resident, a fifty-two-year-old marathon runner with no cholesterol issues or family history of heart disease, came into the ER after her husband was in a car accident. As she was taken back to the trauma room, her husband was shocked with the paddles of the defibrillator for the last time and pronounced dead right in front of her. She became nauseous, started vomiting, was transferred to intensive care, and later that night this young female marathon runner with no heart disease risk factors died of a broken heart.”

Back in 1990, a Japanese cardiovascular specialist discovered a condition whereby severe emotional or physical stress causes one of the chambers of the heart to temporarily deform significantly enough that it resembles a Japanese fishing device for catching octopus – thus the name takotsubo cardiomyopathy (tako is Japanese for octopus, tsubo for pot). The condition has

become known as “Broken Heart Syndrome” and while most people recover within a few months, it can be fatal.

Last March, a study found that while societal changes have led to an increase in loneliness (think watching Netflix alone on the sofa vs going out to the movie with friends), social isolation increases the risk of death at a rate similar to the well-known risk factors of smoking, high blood pressure and obesity. Additionally, the study found that individuals with strong relationships have as much as [50% increased likelihood of survival](#) over the study timeframe compared to people with weaker relationships. “Precious few pharmaceuticals show that kind of benefit,” says Dr. Menolascino.

Then in June, [another study](#) conducted a systematic review of past research on the association between marriage and heart disease, and researchers drew several conclusions: unmarried people were more likely to develop heart disease and divorce was associated with an increase in death from heart disease, however, being widowed had no association with increased risk of heart disease. “Of course, there are more factors at play here than love,” explains Dr. Menolascino, “however it is interesting that these elements of health that we can clearly feel in our emotions and sense of well-being as associated with love are now being proven to be very real factors in disease resistance or development.”

During his lectures at medical conferences, Dr. Menolascino presents love-as-medicine in his presentations. He says, “I encourage fellow doctors to tell their patients to get at that all-important social aspect in every aspect of life; don’t just suggest exercise, but suggest joining a walking or biking club or go dancing with their partner. When you eat food, choose food that nourishes you and don’t eat alone – do it with someone you love-even if it is your pet!”

Dr. Mark Menolascino is the author of [Heart Solution for Women](#), a new book that presents an achievable yet cutting-edge recipe for heart health presented alongside the unfortunate story of how heart health in women has not been treated with the same care as men. He is uniquely trained as a traditional Internal Medicine Specialist, advanced nutrition, Chinese medicine, Ayurvedic Medicine, Integrative/Functional Medicine and has achieved four board certifications and a dual Master’s degree in Pharmacology/Immunology. He serves as Medical Director for The Meno Clinic for Functional Medicine in Jackson Hole.



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