Does loneliness affect life span?

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The Washington Post:

THE QUESTION Not exercising, being obese, smoking and abusing drugs are among the factors known to shorten people's life spans. Might being lonely or socially isolated have a similar effect?

THIS STUDY analyzed data from 70 studies, involving 3.4 million people who were, on average, 66 years old at the start of their study. During the research periods, which averaged seven years, about 25 percent of the participants died.

People who reported being lonely were 26 percent more likely to have died than those who did not. Mortality risk was 20 percent higher for those who were socially isolated than for those who were not and 32 percent higher for people who lived alone vs. those who did not. The chance of having died during a study was also greater for middle-age adults who were lonely or lived alone than for those people of all sorts who were older than 65.

Read the whole story: *The Washington Post*