

# For Couples, Mutual Ambivalence Increases Cardiovascular Risk

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## *Pacific Standard:*

Toxic relationships have long been linked to poorer health. But newly published research suggests that, to increase your chances of developing cardiovascular problems, you and your spouse don't have to despise one another.

Mutual ambivalence will do the trick.

That's the disturbing finding of a team of University of Utah researchers led by health psychologist Bert Uchino. Figuring that totally negative relationships are rare (at home, if not at the workplace), they decided to look at whether having mixed feelings about one's partner presents a health risk.

Their results, published in the journal *Psychological Science*, suggest the answer is yes—if your partner has similarly conflicted feelings about you.

Uchino and his colleagues looked at 136 older couples (people in their 60s who had been married more than 30 years). All underwent scans to measure coronary artery calcification—the amount of plaque build-up in those vital blood vessels. This measurement is “a robust predictor of cardiovascular risk,” the researchers note.

Read the whole story: [\*Pacific Standard\*](#)