- Socialization



The hidden health impact of social isolation

Interactions with friends and family may protect our health by boosting immunity and lowering disease risk, including heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes, according to a study published in *Nature Human Behaviour*. Researchers from the UK and China analysed blood samples from more than 42,000 adults in the UK Biobank, linking 175 proteins with social isolation and 26 proteins with loneliness, many associated with inflammation and immune responses. Key proteins, such as ADM, circulating in the blood of socially isolated people, were tied to stress regulation, brain changes and early death risk. Another protein, ASGR1, was linked to higher cholesterol and cardiovascular disease. Social connections are vital for good health and wellbeing, and rising loneliness is a growing public health issue, says professor Barbara Sahakian from the University of Cambridge. Addressing social isolation could help prevent health decline and promote wellbeing. *Source: Nature Human Behaviour.*