



Is loneliness another pandemic?

Loneliness in adolescents: building social connections



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Loneliness: the silent killer

Americans are lonely and it's killing them. How the US can combat this new epidemic.

HEALTH

America has a loneliness epidemic. **FEATURES**
Here are 6 steps to address it

MAY 2, 2023 · 3:21 PM ET

America's Loneliness Epidemic: What Is to Be Done?

The Loneliness Pandemic

The psychology and social costs of isolation in everyday life

POLICY HEALTHCARE

The surgeon general says loneliness is as deadly as smoking

Loneliness: a silent plague that is hurting young people most

Fit for ever

The loneliness trap: it is said to be as bad as smoking. So will it shorten my lifespan?

Lonely people are more likely to get heart disease, strokes, anxiety, depression, dementia ... Add it all up, and they're 26% more likely to die early. How do you avoid joining the unhappy millions?
By Phil Daoust

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Covid: Loneliness a 'bigger health risk than smoking or obesity'

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Coronavirus

'Socially stunted': how Covid pandemic aggravated young people's loneliness

Combination of lockdowns, personal issues and being stuck in 'digital bubbles' has left many feeling isolated and friendless



Just under one in 10 people aged 16 to 29 report feeling lonely often or always, according to an analysis of ONS data. Photograph: Photographer, Batak Gurbuz Derman/Getty Images

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Global development

This article is more than 6 months old

WHO declares loneliness a 'global public health concern'

The World Health Organization has launched an international commission on loneliness, which can be as bad for people's health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day



Between 5% and 15% of adolescents are lonely, according to figures that are likely to be underestimates. Photograph: Manish Swarup/AP

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Loneliness

This article is more than 4 years old

Study finds half of 16- to 24-year-olds hit by 'lockdown loneliness'

The equivalent of 7.4 million people across Great Britain say wellbeing has been affected

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Introduction

We all feel lonely from time to time, here are some examples of such situations:

- When we don't have someone to sit down for lunch with
- When we move to a new city
- When our friends do not have time for us on the weekend
- When you get a good news and you have no one to share it with

Over the past few years this occasional feeling has become a constant!

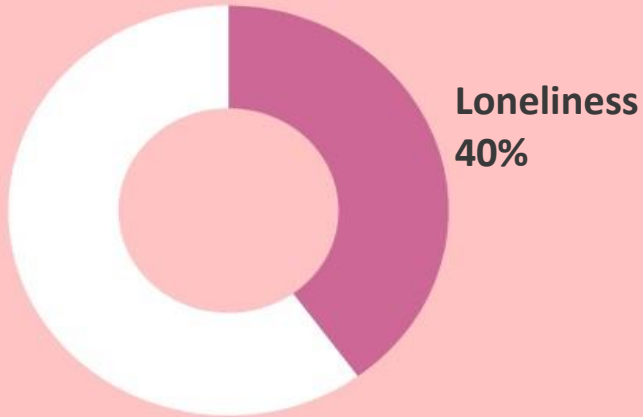
The most connected generation in history is also the loneliest.



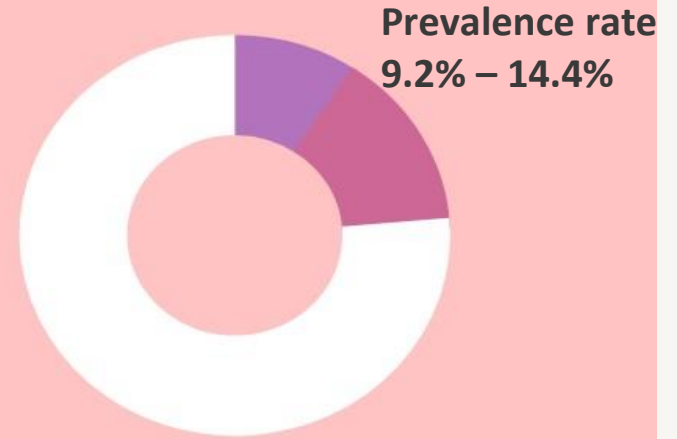
llll



Prevalence in adolescence



40% adolescents reported feeling lonely often or very often (Qualter et al., 2013)



Prevalence rates of loneliness (12 to 17 years) varied between 9.2% and 14.4% across 76 countries (Surkalim et al., 2022).

The background features a light beige color with several abstract shapes and patterns. A large, solid teal circle is positioned in the upper center. In the top right corner, there is a cluster of small teal dots and a dashed teal line. In the bottom left corner, there are two teal circles of different sizes, a dashed teal line, and the word "llll" written in a teal cursive font. On the right edge, there is a teal concentric circle pattern.

What is loneliness?

Feeling alone vs being alone



Loneliness is an emotional state, when you feel alone or disconnected from others.



You can be home alone, but you don't experience loneliness. It's a physical state.



Why study loneliness?



Chronic loneliness outcomes



Anxiety

(Vanhalst et al., 2013)



Depression

(Qualter et al., 2010; Ladd & Ettekal 2013; Qualter et al., 2013).



Suicidal Thoughts

(Schinka et al., 2013)



Physical Health Problems

(Caspi et al., 2006)



Mortality Rate

Increased by 26% (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2015)



Implications of Chronic Loneliness



- 01 A self-reinforcing and highly detrimental risk factor for maladjustment (e.g., Qualter et al., 2015).
- 02 **Heightened vigilance in the face of social threat**
Leading them to view the social world as a more threatening place (Cacioppo & Hawkley 2009).
- 03 **Experience more negative affects**
When encounter negative social interactions (van Roekel et al., 2013).

The background features a light beige color with large, soft-edged organic shapes. A prominent dark brown circle is positioned in the upper center. In the top right, there is a cluster of small teal dots and a dashed teal line. On the right edge, a teal concentric circle pattern is visible. In the bottom left, there are two teal circles of different sizes, a dashed teal line, and a teal scribble. The central text is in a dark teal, bold, sans-serif font.

Where does my research fit in?

Exploring underlying mechanisms that can lead to or maintain chronic loneliness

Emotion Regulation

A likely mechanism that has been implicated in loneliness and other mental health disorders (Lincoln, Schulze, & Renneberg, 2022, Preece et al., 2021).

Individuals who experience persistent loneliness often struggle with effectively managing their emotions related to social interactions and feelings of isolation (Qualter et al., 2015).





Goal of the research

Propose strategies to enhance social connectedness

Current research focuses on:

- (a) Changing how people think
- (b) Social skills and psychoeducation
- (c) Socially focused supporters
- (d) Creative Expression



Interested to be involved in research?



ECHO-O LAB

- 1. Social connectedness and mental health** (zain.khan.2022@live.rhul.ac.uk)
- 2. RISE project (Reactions and Interacting on Social mEdia)** (gemma.rides@rhul.ac.uk)



Thank you!



ECHO LAB

Do you have any questions



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