

Researchers discover a new miracle cure for cancer... marriage

Doctors have discovered a cancer treatment that outranks all others – marriage.

It helps patients with **lung cancer** live significantly longer than if they were single, giving them a threefold higher chance of surviving at least three years.

On the basis of these results, if marriage were a drug it would be hailed as a **miracle cure**.

Lung cancer is the UK's biggest cancer killer, claiming almost 20,000 lives a year, and no existing treatment comes anywhere near delivering the same effect. A similar benefit has been seen in other cancers, including those of the prostate, and head and neck.

A study of 168 patients with advanced lung cancer who were treated with chemotherapy and radiation over a decade from 2000 to 2010 found **a third of those who were married were still alive after three years compared with 10 per cent of those who were single.**

Previous research has shown marriage benefits men more than women, but among these survivors it was women who fared best. Almost half (46 per cent) lived for at least three years if they were married, compared with just 3 per cent of single men.

Cancer patients need support with daily activities, with proper follow up care and help travelling to and from hospital for appointments. The researchers from the University of Maryland, who presented their findings at the 2012 Symposium on Thoracic Oncology in Chicago yesterday, said this was the likely explanation of why married patients did better.

"Marital status appears to be an important independent predictor of survival in patients with locally advanced non-small cell lung cancer. The reason for this is unclear, but our findings suggest the importance of social support in managing and treating our lung cancer patients," said Elizabeth Nichols, a radiation oncology who led the study.

"We believe that better supportive care and support mechanisms for cancer patients can have a greater impact on **increasing survival** than many new cancer therapy techniques," she said. "Not only do we need to continue to focus on finding new drugs and cancer therapies, but also on ways to better support our cancer patients,"

A study of 440,000 Norwegian men and women, **published last year, found that men who never married were 35 per cent more likely to die from cancer than married men. Never-married women were 22 per cent more likely to die of cancer than those who were married.**