

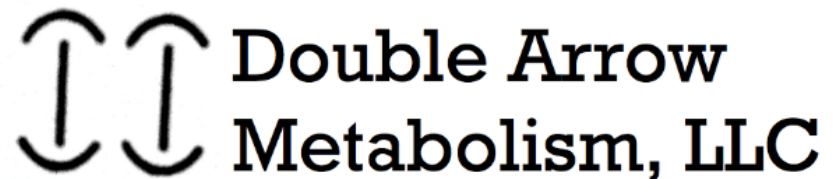
Good Neighboring as Good Medicine?

Justin Moore, MD, FACP

Disclosures

Owner, Double Arrow Metabolism, LLC

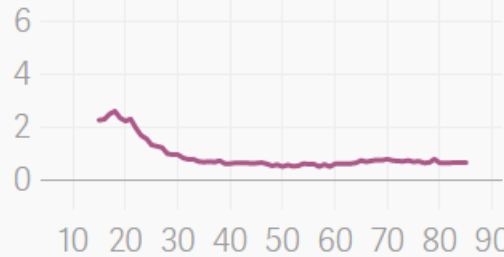
- Vigilias Telehealth
- Rubicon MD
- CaseNetwork
- CrowdMed
- HealthICT
- KDHE
- KHC



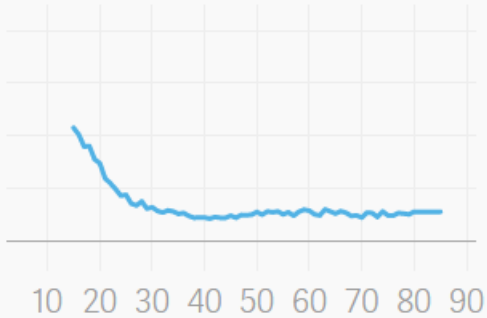
Who Americans spend their time with

Friends

8 hours per day (2003-2015)

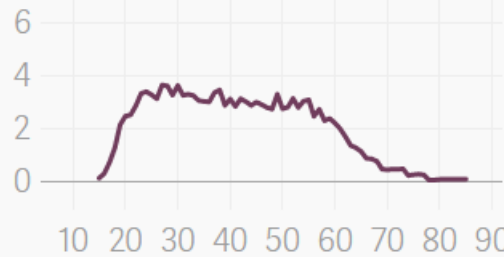


Parents, siblings, family

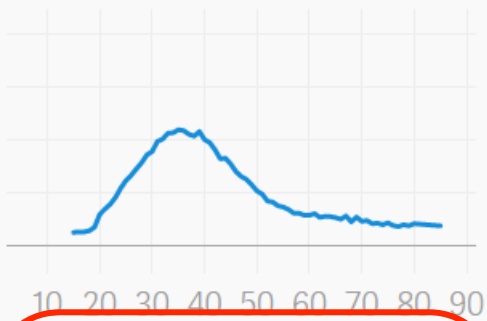


Co-workers

8 hours per day (2003-2015)

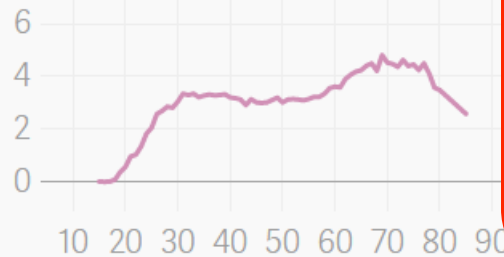


Children

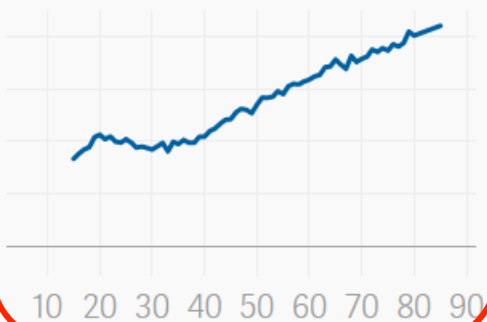


Partner

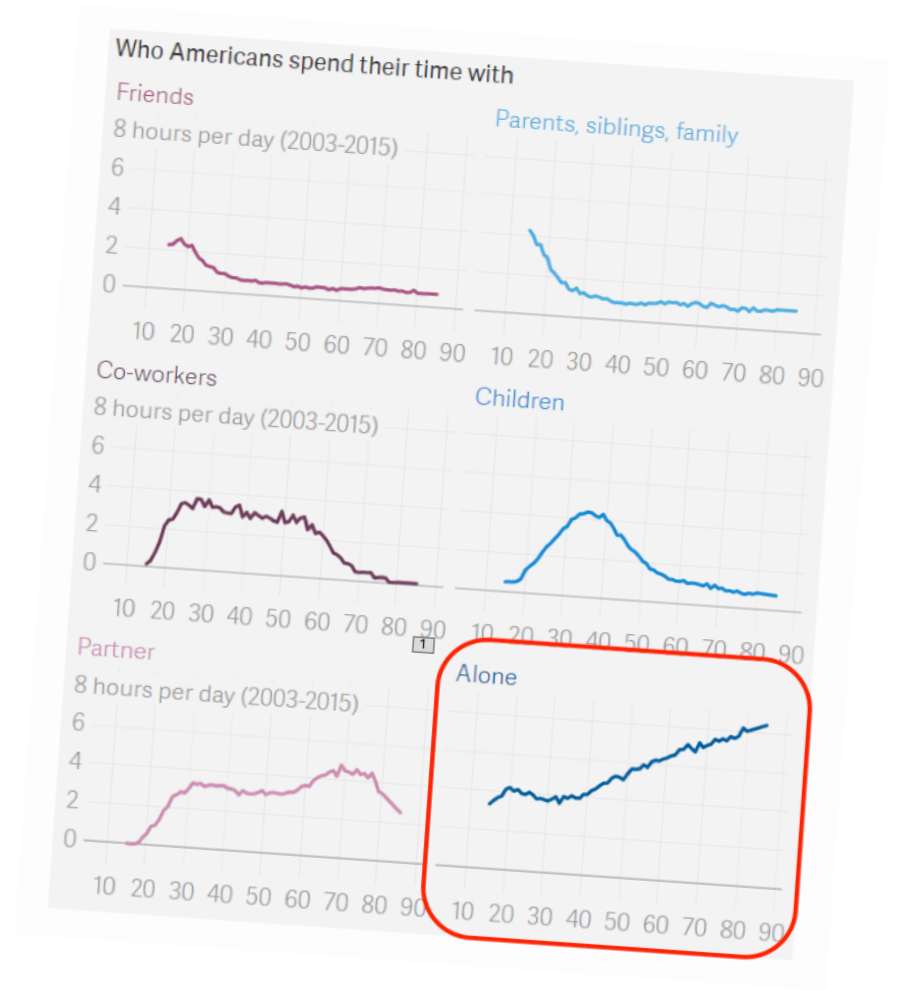
8 hours per day (2003-2015)



Alone



Is this good?
Is it bad?
Is it a red herring?



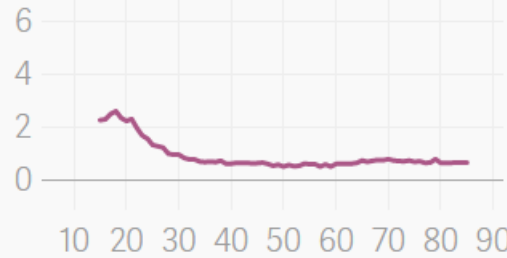
By the end of this workshop, you'll be able to:

- Define social isolation and loneliness
- Recognize that social isolation has a profound effect on the life expectancy of elders, and that social isolation is trickling into younger age groups
- Demonstrate a working knowledge of the data on isolation and the effect of social media
- Identify risk factors for isolation
- Propose potential interventions that might be useful in church or clinic outreach programs

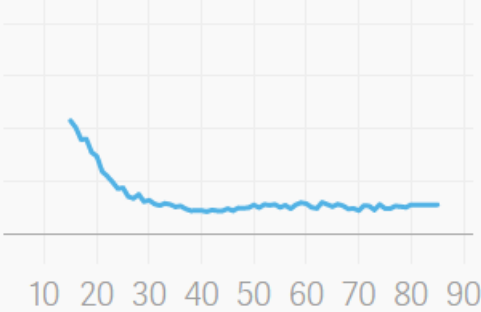
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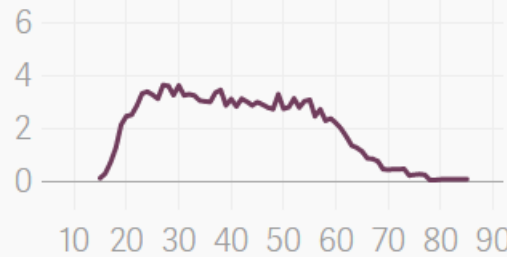


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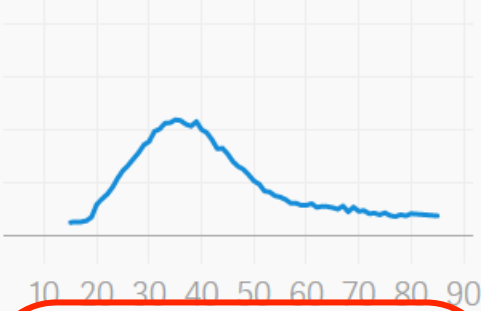


Co-workers

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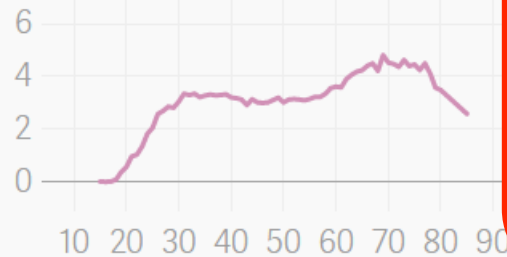


Children

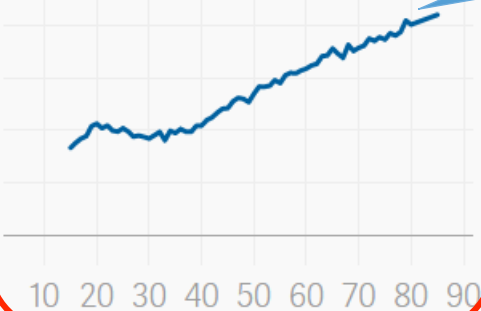


Partner

8 hours per day (2003-2015)



Alone



- 30% of those over age 65 live alone
- 50% over age 85

Social isolation

A state of lack of contact between an individual and society

Loneliness

A subjective feeling that your social connections fall short of what you desire

Both are bad for you

- Social isolation: 29% increased mortality
- Loneliness (subjective or objective): 26% increased mortality
- Living alone: 32% increased mortality
 - The sicker you are otherwise, the stronger the association
 - The younger you are, the more predictive the association

What are the risk factors?

- Aging
- Domestic violence
- Poor health and disabilities
- Living alone/Loss of a spouse
- Unemployment
- Transportation problems
- Societal adversity
- New parenthood

What's the mechanism?



- Microbiome
- Decreased immune function
- The Nature Fix

The Lens Hypothesis*

- Through a lens of scarcity:
 - You hoard food and preserve those calories by sitting in your La-Z-Boy
 - Your neighbor's new car induces a twinge of jealousy
- Through a lens of abundance:
 - Moves good choices from being a chore to being a choice.
 - Your neighbor's new car causes you a sense of relief. You can see the year's salary you saved by driving your perfectly good ten year-old car as a reward for the regular 30-minute walks or 10-minute bike rides to the grocery store

*Justin's only. Untested.

Disengagement

2015: 22% of men without a college education had not worked at all in the prior 12 months

2000: <10% of such men were in similar circumstances

What's happening to the excess time?

- Of the rise in leisure time, *75% was accounted for by ~~video games~~ recreational narcotic use*
- Newly ubiquitous mind-altering drugs may challenge us further on this point

“...it is possible that [video games] are too good. Today’s games seem to be displacing careers, friendships and families, and thus stopping young people (particularly men) from starting real, adult lives.”

2012: >50% of Americans own a smartphone

- “iGen”: born between 1995 and 2012
- 12th-graders in 2015 left the house less often than eighth-graders did in 2009
- 56% of high-school seniors in 2015 went out on dates
 - 85% of their parents did as seniors
- Sexual activity among 9th graders is down 40% since 1991
 - Teen birth rate hit an all-time low in 2016, down 67% since 1991

Twenge JM. Have Smartphones Destroyed a Generation?

<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/09/has-the-smartphone-destroyed-a-generation/534198/>, accessed 8/29/17.

What can we do about it?

- Organizational volunteering reduces mortality risk by 24%¹
 - As public religiosity increases, the relationship becomes stronger
 - Relationship stronger if volunteers profess “other-oriented” reasons²

¹Psychol Aging 2013, PMID: 23421326; ²Health Psychol 2012, PMID: 21842999

What can we do about it?

“Doubling the rate of religious attendance raises household income by 9.1 percent, decreases welfare participation by 16 percent from baseline rates, decreases the odds of being divorced by 4 percent, and increases the odds of being married by 4.4 percent.”

Ironically, living in an area with more *co-religionists* leads to better economic outcomes through the channel of increased religious participation:

- Religious attendance increases the number of social interactions in a way peculiar to religious settings
- Religious institutions provide financial and emotional "insurance" that help people mitigate their losses when setbacks occur
- That attendance at religious schools may be an advantage
- Religious faith may simply improve well-being directly by enabling the faithful to be "less stressed out" by the problems of every day life

What can we do about it?

- Should we see lonely people as a new population to be catered or marketed to? Are they a constituency?

Conclusions

- Social isolation is a state of being; loneliness is a perception of that state of being
- Risk factors are diverse and cross demographic lines
- Social isolation has a profound effect on the mortality rate of elders, and that social isolation is trickling into younger age groups
 - Video games, smartphones and social media may be paradoxically (?) causing this
- Volunteering and church engagement may improve quality of life and quantity of life

Questions?

“We always overestimate the change that will occur in the next two years and underestimate the change that will occur in the next 10.”

- BILL GATES

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