

# Divorced people more likely to die from preventable accidents

October 30 2013, by Amy Hodges

---

Divorced people are more likely to die from preventable accidents than married counterparts, according to a new study from sociologists at Rice University and the University of Pennsylvania. The study also found that single people and those with low educational attainment are at greater risk for accidental death.

The study, "The Social Side of Accidental Death," examines the links among social relationships, socio-economic status and how long and well people live. The authors found that divorced people are more than twice as likely than married people to die from what the World Health Organization (WHO) cites as the most-preventable causes of accidental death (fire, poisoning and smoke inhalation) and equally likely to die from the least-preventable causes of accidental death (air and water transportation mishaps).

In addition, compared with married adults, single people are twice as likely to die from the most preventable causes of accidental death and equally likely to die from the least preventable causes of accidental death. People with low educational attainment, compared with more highly educated adults, are more than twice as likely to die from the most-preventable accidents and equally likely to die from the least-preventable accidents.

The researchers compared 1,302,090 adults aged 18 and older who survived or died from [accidents](#) between 1986 and 2006. The data was from multiple years of the National Health Interview Survey, which

includes demographic information about participants from throughout the 50 states, including age, race and income. Accidental underlying causes of death are defined through the World Health Organization's 10th revision of the International Statistical Classification of Diseases, Injuries and Causes of Death.

Justin Denney, assistant professor of sociology at Rice, associate director of the Kinder Institute for Urban Research's Urban Health Program and the study's lead author, said it stands to reason that if [social relationships](#) and socio-economic resources prolong life, then they should be more important in situations where death can reasonably be avoided and less valuable in situations that closely resemble random events.

"Well-educated individuals, on average, have greater socio-economic resources, which can be used to their advantage to prevent accidental death (i.e., safeguarding a home from fire)," Denney said. "In addition, these individuals tend to be more knowledgeable about practices that may harm their health, such as excessive alcohol and drug use. And marital status is influential in that it can provide positive support, may discourage a partner's risk and offer immediate support that saves lives in the event of an emergency."

Denney hopes the research will encourage further research of [accidental death](#) and how it may be prevented.

**More information:** The study was co-authored by Monica He, a 2013 Rice graduate and current demography Ph.D. student at the University of Pennsylvania, and will appear in an upcoming edition of *Social Science Research*. The research is available online at [www.sciencedirect.com/science/ ... ii/S0049089X13001348](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/.../ii/S0049089X13001348)

Provided by Rice University

Citation: Divorced people more likely to die from preventable accidents (2013, October 30)  
retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2013-10-divorced-people-die-accidents.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.