

Study: Comedy films good for your heart

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A University of Maryland study suggests watching comedy films boosts blood flow to the heart.

Researchers asked 20 healthy young adults to watch 15 to 30 minute segments of sad movies, such as the opening scene from "Saving Private Ryan," and humorous films such as "There's Something About Mary."

Researchers found brachial artery blood flow -- a good indicator of the body's blood flow -- was reduced in 14 of the 20 participants after watching movie clips that caused distress. But it was increased in 19 of the 20 participants after watching movie clips that elicited laughter. The difference in flow between sad and comedic films exceeded 50 percent.

The extent of the impact of watching a sad film was of the same magnitude as remembering episodes of anger and doing mental arithmetic, said the authors, while researchers said the impact of watching a funny film was equivalent to a bout of aerobic exercise or starting statin treatment.

The study is detailed in the journal Heart.

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