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Marriage May Help Reduce Risk of Dementia

CHICAGO, IL---A recent study found that unmarried, middle-aged people are more likely to develop cognitive impairment than married people of the same age.

In the Swedish study, the results of which were presented at the Alzheimer's Association International Conference on Alzheimer's Disease in Chicago, more than 1,400 Finnish people were questioned in midlife and then again in 1998, an average of 21 years later. Almost 10 percent were diagnosed with some form of cognitive impairment in 1998, with 48 diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease.

Researchers adjusted their figures to take into account weight, physical activity and education, and participants with partners still had a 50 percent lower risk of showing signs of impairment later in life than those who lived alone. Those who stayed single had a doubled risk of dementia, while those who were divorced from midlife onward had triple the risk.

The reasons behind the results weren't entirely clear, but study author Krister Hakansson of the Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm said, "Cognitive and intellectual stimulation has been reported to be protective against dementia in general. Living in a couple means that you are confronted with other ideas, perspectives and needs. You have to compromise, make decisions and solve problems together with someone else, which is more complicated and challenging."

To learn more about Alzheimer's disease and the Greater Illinois Chapter's services call 1.800.272.3900 or visit www.alz.org/illinois.

About the Alzheimer's Association - The Alzheimer's Association, the world leader in Alzheimer research and support, is the largest voluntary health organization dedicated to finding prevention methods, treatments and cure for Alzheimer's. Since 1980, the donor-supported, nonprofit Alzheimer's Association has provided reliable information and care consultation; created supportive services for families; increased funding for dementia research; and influenced public policy changes. **The Greater Illinois Chapter** serves dozens of counties with offices in Bloomington, Carterville, Chicago, Joliet, Rockford and Springfield. For more information, call our Helpline at 800-272-3900 or visit www.alz.org/illinois.

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