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## Love really is good for your heart

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MEN who feel that their partners find them attractive are less likely to have a heart attack or stroke.

But those who feel their partners do not find them desirable are as likely to suffer coronary illness or strokes as those who smoke or are obese - even if they are not overweight and do not smoke.

Italian researchers believe close relationships are essential for human beings and that feeling loved has a physical as well as a psychological benefit.

'Apparently, having a partner who desires you is not only fun, but it also protects your health,' they say in their report.

'This is tantamount to saying that a perceived love protects a lover's life.' That will no doubt be music to the ears of the likes of Michael Douglas, 65, whose wife Catherine Zeta-Jones, 40, recently revealed in an interview how she remained attracted to him after nine years of marriage.

She said: 'He knows exactly what he wants and what life is about. That impresses me. Michael can also be a real softie. He sends me flowers and cries when his kids say something particularly pathetic. I need a man who is sensitive and caring.' The researchers tracked 1,687 men for up to eight years to monitor their health. One of the aim was to look at relationships and risk of heart disease or stroke.

The results showed men whose partners had moderate to low sexual desire for them were 2.6 times more likely to have a stroke, heart attack or other cardiovascular problem.

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