

Middle-aged **American adults experience the highest levels of loneliness** well before retirement, a phenomenon rarely seen in other countries. A new study analyzing data from **more than 64,000 individuals aged 50 and older** across 29 countries found that **loneliness in the U.S. peaks during middle age**, rather than later years.

Why is midlife loneliness so pronounced in the U.S.? Experts point to several key factors contributing to loneliness in America:

- **Unemployment:** Losing a job in middle age can lead to social isolation.
- **Marital status:** People who are single or lack family connections are more likely to feel lonely.
- **Health issues:** Depression, chronic illnesses, and physical decline restrict social interactions.

Unlike in other countries, where **unemployment tends to impact older adults more**, in the U.S., **job loss during middle age** has a greater effect, **reducing social support networks**.

How does loneliness affect health? Studies confirm that loneliness poses serious health risks:

- **It increases the likelihood of heart disease and stroke,**
- **Raises the risk of premature death,**
- According to the U.S. Surgeon General's research, **loneliness can be as harmful as smoking 15 cigarettes a day.**

How can loneliness be reduced? Experts suggest strengthening social connections:

- **Engaging in group sports or activities,**
- **Joining hobby clubs or religious communities,**
- **Regularly calling or messaging friends and family.**

Loneliness is a major societal issue that requires effective solutions.