

WHAT BECOMES OF THE BROKENHEARTED?

There's not a person in the world that can't relate to those melodic Motown lyrics in some shape or form. Whether it be a lost love, a death, a departure, or a yearning for something in the past, we have all experienced that deep, penetrating ache from within our souls. Cartoons have depicted it. Cupid has mended it. No matter how we experience it, there is no denying that it is real.

Identified first in the 1980's, researchers in Japan discovered a disease that is actually caused by a broken heart. It is mostly found in middle-aged to post-menopausal women who have had some kind of recent emotional stress such as:

- ⌚ Unexpected death of a loved one
- ⌚ Financial loss
- ⌚ Victim of violence/crime
- ⌚ Shocking news
- ⌚ Intense anger

What's most interesting, is that the majority of these patients were previously healthy, with no prior history of cardiac disease. They come to the emergency room complaining of symptoms that resemble a heart attack such as chest pain, palpitations and shortness of breath. Upon further testing, it was discovered that the apex of the heart ventricle, the lowest and most muscular part of the heart that is responsible for pumping blood to the rest of the body, was dilated like a balloon. While the base, the top where the blood pumps into the body, was constricted, causing wall motion abnormalities. Because of this peculiar shape, scientists named this disease "Takatsubo" after the name of an octopus trap used in Japan, to which it resembles the same shape.

"Broken Heart Disease" as it's more affectionately known, is thought to be a result of the release of a group of stress hormone called catecholamines, such as adrenaline (more specifically epinephrine and norepinephrine), which in large amounts can be cardio toxic, stunning the heart and causing temporary dysfunction. Even with EKG patterns similar to a heart attack, blood tests do not reveal any kind of cardiac damage, such as increased cardiac enzymes, nor have MRI shown permanent myocardial damage.

Although this condition is not benign, the good news is that the majority of Takatsubo sufferers make a full recovery within a few days, much faster than those who suffered a true heart attack.

To date, some studies conducted in animals show estrogen to be cardio protective against this disease, but that stands true for most cardiac disease. The best advice for women who are pre or postmenopausal age is to strengthen their coping skills through mind-body disciplines such as meditation, martial arts, and yoga. Because the heart is resilient, and there is no limit to what it can endure. For More information visit www.HeartandHealth.com or contact us at Heart and Health 1350 Deer Park Ave N- Babylon NY 11703 (631) 482-1355

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