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**Dialling out: A study on overcoming loneliness through call and touch**

**Abstract**

As a social species, humans deprived of contact find loneliness a distressing and difficult condition. Recently, the influence of touch on loneliness was discovered. Touch has been found to reduce feelings of neglect, a subscale of loneliness. Affectionate touch, which demonstrates care or affection has been previously linked to wellbeing in couples. However, neither the speculation that increased access to physical contact in relationships lowers loneliness nor the effect touch through video calls has on loneliness have been investigated. To investigate this a survey and experiment were designed. Participants answered a survey about home, social and romantic relationships, including frequency of touch and feelings of loneliness. A Zoom call with no video, video, or video with ‘touch’ was then applied with another measure of loneliness after the call. Findings suggest that touch plays a significant role in relationships, yet does not appear to significantly lower feelings of loneliness in video calls. The frequency of touch in a relationship was found to significantly influence feelings of loneliness, with individuals in low touch relationships having loneliness scores more comparable to single participants than to those in high touch relationships. Additionally, extraversion played a major role in moderating the effect of touch in relationships. Furthermore, there was no significant difference in reduction of loneliness across, a call with no video, video or video with touch, but overall loneliness scores were reduced. These results emphasize the importance of physical contact in lowering feelings of loneliness within relationships and the ability of calls to lower feelings of loneliness regardless of touch or video.