# Survey highlights gender disparities in mental wellbeing after clock change



In October 2022, a nationwide survey conducted by scientists from Liverpool John Moores University and the University of Oxford, in collaboration with The Guardian, examined the impact of the biannual clock change on people's mental wellbeing. Over 12,000 individuals participated in the study, which aimed to measure various aspects of life satisfaction, stress levels, and overall wellbeing before and shortly after the clocks were set back an hour.

Findings from this survey revealed noticeable disparities in the experiences of men and women in the wake of the clock change. The results indicated that women's mental health and wellbeing were adversely affected almost immediately, while men reported higher levels of wellbeing and life satisfaction. For instance, one female respondent articulated her struggle with the change, stating, "I am spinning out of control. Mind is overactive. Very behind in tasks. No idea what time it is." In contrast, a male participant expressed a feeling of accomplishment, noting that he had "accomplished more already" in the "extra" hour afforded by the change.

Women particularly highlighted challenges in adjusting the routines of young children to align with the new clock. Difficulties such as disrupted bedtimes and getting children prepared on time added to the stress family life. Those who participated in the survey described a sense of time dragging after the clocks changed, a sentiment that was notably absent in male responses, as men reported more positive experiences overall.

The survey also indicated a general worsening of work-life balance for both genders post-clock change, hinting at how darker evenings might limit one's perception of time available for personal pursuits after work. As one female participant reflected, “The feeling of the sudden darkness this evening filled me with dread for the dark months … A gradual daily shift would be so much easier to cope with.” This struggle for balance, particularly when combined with the stress of a punctuality-induced routine, raises concerns about the potential health implications for those affected, as burnout remains a leading cause of absenteeism in the workplace.

While the autumn change brought challenges, attention will soon shift to the upcoming transition to British summer time. Evidence suggests that the switch in spring may contribute to an increase in vehicular accidents and health issues such as heart attacks. Additionally, it appears that individuals with conditions like seasonal affective disorder and depression may experience heightened symptoms due to the abrupt change in time. The survey alluded to the idea that the loss of just one hour could have disproportionate effects on mental health and wellbeing, leading to increased stress levels.

One of the key explanations for the observed negative effects may lie in the disruption of circadian rhythms, which regulate sleep and eating patterns. This disruption can lead to heightened stress hormone levels, specifically cortisol, which over extended periods can increase vulnerability to various health conditions. Acknowledging these health implications, the American Medical Association has proposed the cessation of clock changes altogether.

The broader implications of temporal shifts on societal wellbeing invite consideration. The research underscores the vital role that time plays in shaping experiences of wellbeing and satisfaction. The survey results mirror findings from the Covid-19 pandemic when 80% of respondents reported feeling time distortion due to lockdown measures, highlighting how adjustments in routine significantly impact mental states.

In a world increasingly dictated by corporate demands and digital connectivity, the constraints imposed by fixed time structures can lead to overwhelming feelings of time poverty. This pressure has made the abrupt changes associated with clock adjustments particularly jarring. The socio-economic ramifications of time-related policies may be unevenly distributed, as those less equipped to manage such changes could suffer more than others.

Ultimately, the conversation surrounding time policies raises important questions about societal structures. Advocates may argue that meaningful reforms to recognise equitable time use and variations in individual experience could benefit overall mental wellbeing. Such discussions suggest a need to rethink the influence of time on our daily lives and consider the potential of establishing norms that promote healthier and more balanced living.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.deeside.com/liverpool-john-moores-scientists-call-for-volunteers-to-explore-impact-of-winter-clock-change/> - This URL supports the study by Liverpool John Moores University on the impact of clock changes on people's wellbeing and time perception, though it mainly focuses on the ongoing study from 2024.
* <https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/about-us/news/articles/2024/10/21/clocksstudy> - Similar to the first URL, this one also discusses the LJMU study on clock changes and time perception but doesn't directly reference the October 2022 survey mentioned in the article.
* <https://www.thenakedscientists.com/articles/interviews/clock-changes-alter-our-perception-time> - This URL explores how clock changes affect people's perception of time and overall functioning, which aligns with the themes discussed in the article.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/oct/25/eu-to-stop-changing-clocks-in-2021-but-uk-will-continue> - While not directly referenced, this URL can indirectly support discussions on the societal impact of biannual clock changes in Europe.
* <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10311201/> - This URL does not directly relate to the specific topic of clock changes but discusses digital evidence in criminal cases, which is unrelated to the article's focus.