

# You don't need a big lottery win for long term happiness... but a few thousand helps

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Researchers at the University of Warwick and Watson Wyatt have been examining just how much money one needs to win in the lottery to have a long term impact on personal happiness. Unsurprisingly the researchers found that small wins in tens or hundreds of pounds made little long term difference, but they also found one did not need to win the jackpot to gain a significant increase in long-term mental wellbeing.

In work to be published in the *Journal of Health Economics*, researchers Professor Andrew Oswald from the University of Warwick and Dr Jonathan Gardner from Watson Wyatt showed that medium-sized lottery wins ranging from around just £1000 to £120,000 had a long term sustained impact in the overall happiness of those winners. On average, two years after their win medium-sized lottery winners had a mental wellbeing GHQ score 1.4 points better than previously - meaning loosely that two years after their win they were just over 10% happier than the average person without a win or only a tiny lottery win.

Intriguingly the researchers also found that this increased happiness is not obvious immediately after the medium-sized win and takes some time to show through. Economist Professor Andrew Oswald from the University of Warwick said:

"This delay could be due the short term disruptive effect on one's live of actually winning, but a more plausible explanation of the delay is that initially many windfall lottery funds are saved and spent later."

The researchers studied 14 years of longitudinal data from the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS) which tracks 5,000 British households.

Source: University of Warwick

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