

# Money problems make people more discontented than loneliness does during lockdown, study finds

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Money problems became the chief source of discontent for people in lockdown, more so than not having close friends or living with a partner,

new research says.

The study also found that as the first lockdown went on people aged 80 and over were significantly less affected than other [age groups](#).

Dr. Amy Andrada and Dr. Ugur Ozdemir, of the University of Edinburgh, analyzed [survey data](#) on over 7,000 people in the UK taken in 2019 and during the first lockdown in 2020.

The interviewees were asked to rate their sense of wellbeing on a score between 1 and 36, and the researchers then adjusted the data to study people of similar backgrounds in order isolate the effect of ethnicity, age, family and [financial situation](#).

Dr. Andrada told the British Sociological Association's online annual conference 15 April that when comparing the rating in 2019 with those in April last year, early in the first lockdown:

- the wellbeing of those aged 20 to 39, women, and people with [financial difficulties](#) had fallen more than average
- people from ethnic minorities, and those with close friends and partners showed no significant difference than average.

However, when comparing their wellbeing in July 2020, after the lockdown had run for over three months, with that in April 2020 the situation had changed:

- those who said their financial situation was quite or very difficult saw a fall in wellbeing of 27% compared to those who did not report any financial difficulty, who saw a fall of only 1%. This was a much stronger effect than in April and caused a larger drop in wellbeing than any other factor, such as not living with a partner or having close friends.

- those aged 80 and over had a smaller fall in wellbeing than any other age group—only 4%, compared to 10% for under 20s.
- the wellbeing of men with partners fell by 3.5%, compared to the figure for those without—7.5%. The situation was reversed for women—those not living with a partner saw a fall of 3.7%, but those with had a fall of 5.5%.
- being a woman or people belonging to an [ethnic minority](#) did not have any significant effect on wellbeing.

"Our findings reveal that, at the onset of the pandemic, women, people aged 20-39, and those concerned about their finances experienced greater levels of deterioration in their wellbeing," Dr. Andrada told the conference.

"As the pandemic entered midterm we start to see very different patterns. The age effect almost disappears—only those older than 80 are doing better, and they consistently did better compared to younger people. This unique outcome may be due to [older adults](#) being more capable of appreciating positive experiences.

"The gender effect disappears—as a gender minority group, women experienced severe mental health outcomes at the onset of the pandemic, yet the significance of this finding dissipates by midterm of the crisis.

"The impact of financial pressures on people's wellbeing becomes much stronger—participants who expressed difficulty with their finances experienced significant consistent declines in wellbeing throughout the pandemic.

"During the pandemic, the quality of close relationships may be a determining factor for [wellbeing](#). Parents with older children started to do better as the crisis entered midterm and men benefit from living with a partner significantly. However, no effect was found among women

with different living arrangements."

The researchers analyzed data on around 7,200 people taken in 2019, April 2020 and July 2020 by the UK Household Longitudinal Survey. Older children are defined as those aged 5-15, and younger ones are 0-4. They used the interviewees' responses to the 12-item General Health Questionnaire, which asks about their ability to concentrate, sleep pattern, confidence, and feelings of stress, among other items.

Provided by British Sociological Association

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