

Sujet 2012

Women more stressed by commuting than men

Women suffer more stress from their daily commute than men according to new research by the London School of Economics (LSE) and the University of Sheffield.

The research, published in the *Journal of Health Economics*, shows that while women spend less time travelling to and at work than men, commuting has a negative effect on women's mental health, while men are generally unaffected.

The researchers suggest that this could be because women have a greater responsibility for day-to-day household tasks, such as childcare and housework, which makes them more sensitive to the time spent commuting.

Jennifer Roberts, Professor of Economics at the University of Sheffield explains: "We know that women, especially those with children, are more likely to add daily errands to their commute such as food shopping and dropping-off and picking-up children from childcare. These time constraints and the reduced flexibility that comes with them make commuting stressful in a way that it wouldn't be otherwise."

The largest adverse effects seen were on women who have pre-school age children. The psychological impact on these women was four times as large as for men with pre-school children.

Even women living with a partner but with no children were affected. The only women unaffected were those who were single with no children or who were able to work flexible hours or whose partners took primary responsibility for childcare.

The only men who suffered psychologically from their commute were those with pre-school age children – and even then the effect was smaller than for women with a partner but without children.

Paul Dolan, Professor of Social Policy at LSE said: "Of course men also experience competing demands on their time, and so it may simply be that they are less affected by the psychological costs of commuting."

The researchers conducted their research using data from the British Household Panel Survey – an annual questionnaire of a sample of households from across the UK. This includes information on employment, social and economic factors, well-being and health.

The survey includes twelve questions specifically related to mental health such as whether respondents have recently lost sleep over worry, felt constantly under strain or been thinking of themselves as worthless.

These data were used to look at the effect of time spent commuting on psychological health while taking into account other factors expected to determine well-being such as income, job satisfaction and housing quality.

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Vous êtes Marie Lefebvre, domiciliée 35 rue des Bois, 21000 Dijon, courriel : mlefebvre@vert.fr.

Vous travaillez depuis un an en tant qu'assistante de gestion dans une PME locale, «L'Eveil des Papilles» qui exporte de l'épicerie fine (*delicatessen products*) au Royaume-Uni.

Vous écrivez à Edward Smithson, directeur des ressources humaines de la société Napket 61-63 Picadilly London W1J ODY, tel : 061 02830633, courriel : edsmith@telmail.net

- Vous lui rappelez que vous avez effectué un stage de 6 semaines dans le service comptabilité de l'entreprise Napket au cours de vos études il y a 3 ans.
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