

# Rich people don't need friends

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In a paper evaluated by f1000 Medicine, six studies tested relationships between reminders of money, social exclusion and physical pain.

In 'The symbolic power of money: reminders of money alter social distress and physical pain' published in the journal [Psychological Science](#), Xinyue Zhou, Kathleen Vohs and Roy Baumeister explored how money could reduce a person's feeling of pain and also negate their need for social popularity.

Harriet de Wit, Faculty Member for f1000 Medicine, said: "This research extends our understanding of relationships between social pain and physical pain, and remarkably, shows how acquired symbolic value of money, perhaps because of associations with power or control, can influence responses to both emotional and physical pain."

She also noted: "These findings have great importance for a social system such as ours that is characterized by wide disparities in financial wellbeing."

Zhou, Vohs and Baumeister determined that interpersonal rejection and physical pain caused desire for money to increase. They said: "Money can possibly substitute for social acceptance in conferring the ability to obtain benefits from the social system. Moreover, past work has suggested that responses to physical pain and social distress share common underlying mechanisms."

"Handling money (compared with handling paper) reduced distress over

social exclusion and diminished the physical pain of immersion in hot water. Being reminded of having spent money, however, intensified both social distress and physical pain," the authors said.

More information: The full text of the evaluation of "The Symbolic Power of Money: Reminders of [Money](#) Alter Social Distress and [Physical Pain](#)" is available free for 90 days at [www.f1000medicine.com/article/ ... wty080l4q/id/1163818](http://www.f1000medicine.com/article/... wty080l4q/id/1163818) DOI: [10.1111/j.1467-9280.2009.02353.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2009.02353.x)

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