

# Childhood poverty impacts well-being in middle age, study shows

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Experiencing poverty in childhood has a particular impact on well-being in adulthood around middle age, according to new research.

A new study conducted at the University of Exeter has concluded that a person's [financial circumstances](#) in [childhood](#) were significantly linked to their sense of well-being once they reached the age bracket of 41–65.

For [adults](#) aged 18–40, only their adulthood financial circumstances were linked to well-being, while for adults aged over 65, neither childhood nor adulthood finances were important to their well-being.

The findings, published in *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, emerge from more than 3,000 responses to the Smartline National Survey, made up of a representative sample of U.K. adults.

Lead author Professor Karyn Morrissey said, "Our research adds to the evidence that childhood is a critical period for well-being in middle age. This indicates that childhood circumstances can come back to 'haunt' us in middle age, which is often a key time in terms of parenting and career progression. We need to address childhood poverty as a matter of urgency, to help benefit the cycle of mental health from one generation to the next. The impact of financial hardship in childhood on well-being in [adulthood](#) found in this study is particularly concerning as levels of child poverty increase in the U.K."

The study is titled "Estimating the Impact of Relative Financial Circumstances in Childhood on Adult Mental Well-being: a Mediation Analysis" and is published in *Applied Research in Quality of Life*.

**More information:** Karyn Morrissey et al, Estimating the Impact of Relative Financial Circumstances in Childhood on Adult Mental Wellbeing: a Mediation Analysis, *Applied Research in Quality of Life* (2022). [DOI: 10.1007/s11482-022-10121-4](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11482-022-10121-4)

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