

May 01 2007

Stressed Out on Four Continents: Time Crunch or Yuppie Kvetch?

Daniel S Hamermesh, Jungmin Lee

[> Author and Article Information](#)

The Review of Economics and Statistics (2007) 89 (2): 374–383.

<https://doi.org/10.1162/rest.89.2.374> [Article history](#) 

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Abstract

Social commentators have pointed to problems of workers who face “time stress” – an absence of sufficient time to accomplish all their tasks. An economic theory views time stress as reflecting how tightly the time constraint binds households. Time stress will be more prevalent in households with higher full earnings and whose members work longer in the market or on “required” homework. Evidence from Australia (2001), Germany (2002), the United States (2003), and Korea (1999) corroborates the theory. Adults in households with higher earnings perceive more time stress for the same amount of time spent in market work and household work. The importance of higher full earnings in generating time stress is not small, particularly in the United States – much is “yuppie kvetch.”

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