

# Work Time Matters for Mental Health: A Gender Analysis of Paid and Unpaid Labor



**Chiara Piovani**

University of Denver &  
Trade, Gender & Development Program  
UNCTAD



UNIVERSITY of  
**DENVER**

COLLEGE OF ARTS, HUMANITIES  
& SOCIAL SCIENCES  
Economics



**Nursel Aydiner-Avsar**

Akdeniz University &  
Trade, Gender & Development Program  
UNCTAD



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# Outline

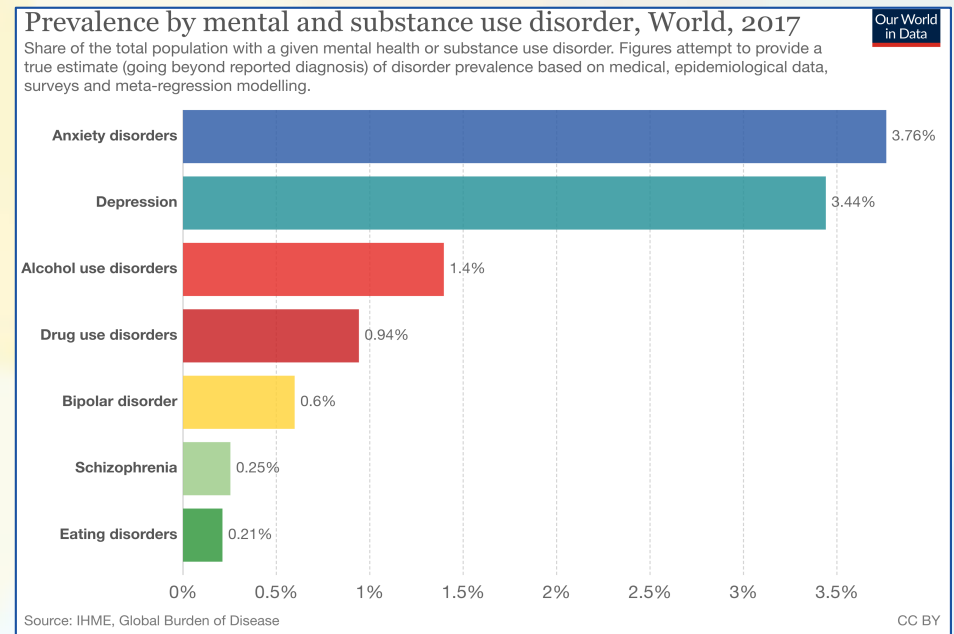


1. Background & motivation
2. The economy and mental health: The role of gender
3. The impact of work time on mental health
4. Empirical analysis
5. Conclusion

# 1. Background & motivation



- Mental health disorders have become a major public health concern worldwide.
- It's estimated that 970 million people worldwide had a mental or substance use disorder in 2017.

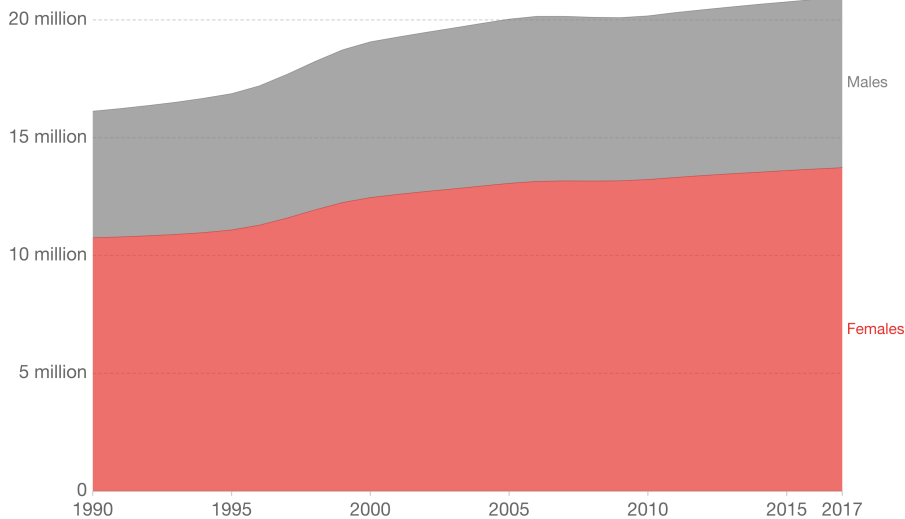


# 1. Background & motivation

- Mental illnesses are common in the United States. Nearly one in five U.S. adults live with a mental illness - 51.5 million in 2019. As of 2019, around 25% of females reported some type of mental illness in the past year, compared to 16% of males (National Institute of Mental Health, 2020)

Number of people with anxiety disorders, United States, 1990 to 2017

Number of people with an anxiety disorder, differentiated by sex. This is measured across all ages. Figures attempt to provide a true estimate (going beyond reported diagnosis) of the number of people with anxiety disorders based on medical, epidemiological data, surveys and meta-regression modelling.

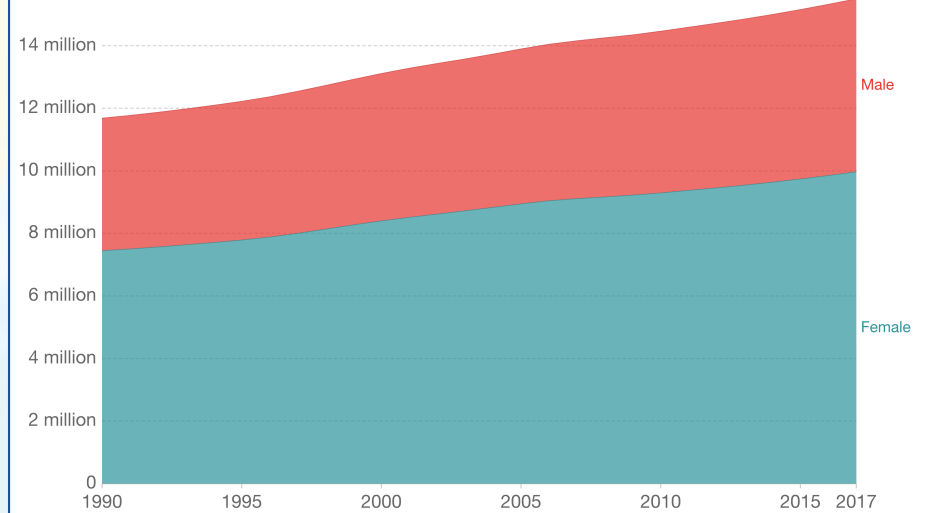


Source: IHME, Global Burden of Disease

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Number of people with depression, United States, 1990 to 2017

Total number of people of all ages with depression, differentiated by sex. Figures attempt to provide a true estimate (going beyond reported diagnosis) of the number of people with depression based on medical, epidemiological data, surveys and meta-regression modelling.



Source: IHME, Global Burden of Disease

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# 1. Background & motivation



- Empirical research on the relationship between the economy and mental health has intensified over the last forty years, especially after the Great Recession

(Dagher, Chen, and Thomas, 2015; Jenkins et al., 2011; Piovani and Aydiner-Avsar, 2015; Stuckler et al., 2011).

- There is still limited research on the gendered impact of the economy on mental health

(Aydiner-Avsar and Piovani, 2019; Dagher and Thomas, 2009; Liu, MacPhail and Dong, 2018; MacDonald, Phipps and Lethbridge, 2005; Strandth et al., 2012; Whelan, Hannan and Creighton, 1991) .

## 2. The Economy and Mental Health



- WHO (2011): comprehensive account of the multiple channels through which the economy and the society affect mental health

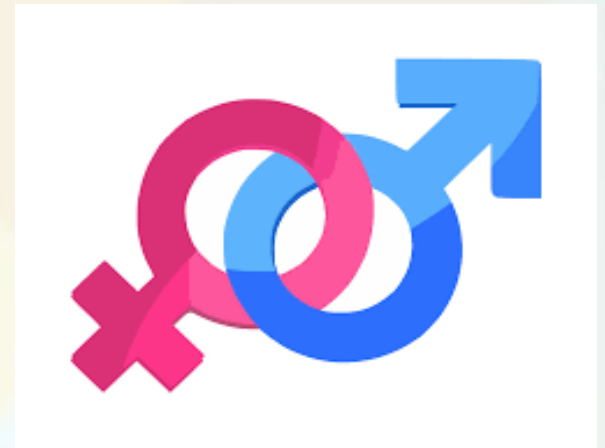
Protective factors	Risk factors
Social capital and welfare protection	Poverty, poor education, deprivation, and high debt
Healthy prenatal and childhood environment	Poor prenatal nutrition, abuse, harsh upbringing, poor relationships with parents, and intergenerational transmission of mental health problems
Healthy workplace and living	Unemployment, job insecurity, and job stress
Healthy lifestyles	Alcohol and/or drug use

*Source:* WHO (2011, p. 4).

## 2. The Economy and Mental Health: The Role of Gender

### ■ What about **GENDER**?

- The breadwinner model under Keynesianism  
=> focus on men as the household heads.
- Starting in the 1980s, as women started to be actively involved in the labor market, some scholars began to consider men & women separately in their analysis (in interaction with other social stratifiers).  
This literature, however, remains scarce.



## 2. The Economy and Mental Health: The Role of Gender



- A gender analysis is essential to find accurate findings and inform effective policies:
  - ❖ As a result of the dominant gender norms and institutions, there are structural gender differences in the economy and in the society;
  - ❖ A traditional view indicates that, due to the typical socialization process, married men and women tend to associate different meanings to holding *multiple roles* (i.e. parent, spouse, and worker) (Simon, 1995).
  - ❖ A competing view claims that it is the quality of these roles that matter (Barnett, 1993).
  - ❖ The role of the "**gender regime**" in the relationship between unemp/emp. and mental health (Strandh et al., 2013)

### 3. The Impact of Work Time on Mental Health



- ❖ ***Question: What is the mental health impact of paid and unpaid work time? Are there gender differences?***

# 3. The Impact of Work Time on Mental Health



## Average minutes per day men and women spent in household activities



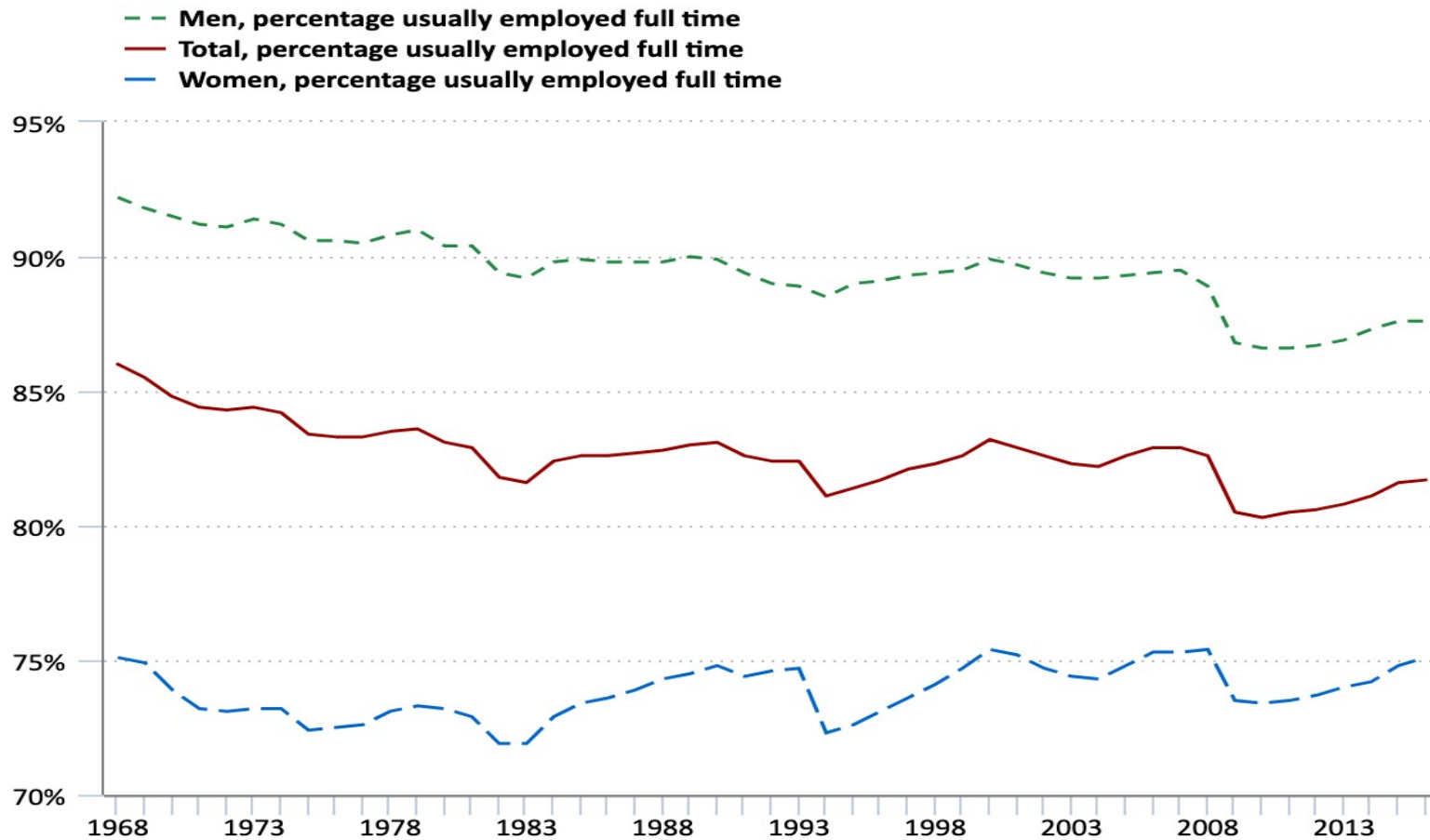
NOTE: Data include all noninstitutional persons age 15 and over. Data include all days of the week and are annual averages for 2015. Travel related to these activities is not included in these estimates.

SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics, American Time Use Survey

# 3. The Impact of Work Time on Mental Health



**Percentage of employed people working full time, by sex, 1968–2016**

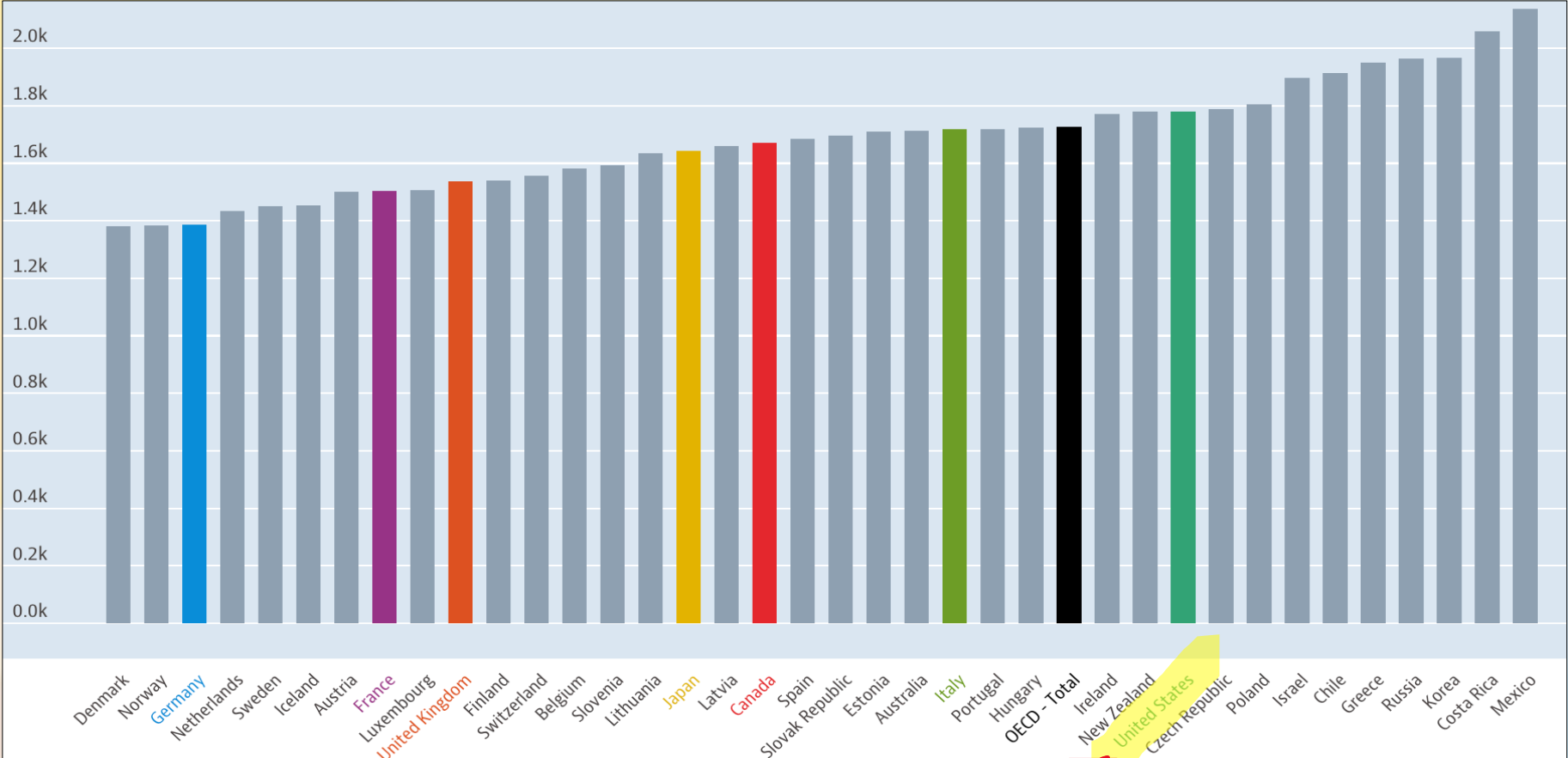


Click legend items to change data display. Hover over chart to view data.  
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

# 3. The Impact of Work Time on Mental Health



Hours worked per year, by OECD country (2019 or latest available)



Source: OECD

### 3. The Impact of Work Time on Mental Health



- **Paid work time** can have both a positive [=> sense of purpose; economic security; source of social relations; structure to the day] & negative [=> lack of control, **scarcity effect** - time as a "health resource"] effect on mental health.
- **Unpaid work time** can have both a positive and negative effect on mental health: gender regime; composition of unpaid work; work-family conflict; **scarcity effect**.
- In combining **paid and unpaid work time**, the potential for **competing demands and role overload** increases.

## 4. Empirical analysis



- Midlife in the United States (MIDUS), 2013-14
- Age > 39 yo
- **“DEMAND:”** “How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? - THE DEMANDS OF EVERYDAY LIFE OFTEN GET ME DOWN  
=> 23% men vs 34% for women
- Average paid work: 41 hrs for men vs 34 hrs for women (hours per week)
- Average unpaid work: 15 hrs for men vs 23 hrs for women (hours per week)

## 4. Empirical analysis



$$y_{it}^* = X'_{it}\beta + e_{it}$$

- Logistic regression model:
- Sample = only employed
- **Dependent variable:** “demand”
- **Key explanatory variables:**
  - ✓ Paid work time
  - ✓ Unpaid work time (assistance + HH chores)
  - ✓ Total work time

# 4. Empirical analysis



- **ECONOMIC BUFFERS:**
  - Household income
  - Health insurance coverage
  - Job characteristics:  
sector & occupation
- **SOCIAL BUFFERS:**
  - Trust  
(=quality of social relations)
  - Marital status
  - # children
  - Perceived respect for unpaid work
- **DEMOGRAPHIC CONTROLS**
  - Age
  - Gender
  - Race & Ethnicity
- **EDUCATION**
- **MENTAL HEALTH** (self-rated)

# 4. The Impact of Total Work Time



demand	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
<u>totalworktime</u>	.0102127	.0039722	2.57	<u>0.010</u>	.0024273	.0179982
<u>female</u>	.4761288	.1712924	2.78	<u>0.005</u>	.1404018	.8118557
age	-.0020642	.0113999	-0.18	0.856	-.0244075	.0202791
white	.3035858	.3229462	0.94	0.347	-.3293771	.9365488
hispanic	.0883769	.4393937	0.20	0.841	-.772819	.9495728
college	-.1194282	.1857247	-0.64	0.520	-.483442	.2445857
familyincome						
2	-.0060263	.3669953	-0.02	0.987	-.7253239	.7132713
3	-.0002746	.3737154	-0.00	0.999	-.7327433	.7321941
4	-.4297728	.3956318	-1.09	0.277	-1.205197	.3456513
5	-.3502824	.439362	-0.80	0.425	-1.211416	.5108512
6	-.2251277	.4176803	-0.54	0.590	-1.043766	.5935107
sector						
Manufacturing	-.4345313	.4042353	-1.07	0.282	-1.226818	.3577554
Services	-.3000822	.3501037	-0.86	0.391	-.9862728	.3861084
occup						
Low-skilled White	-.1217735	.1916933	-0.64	0.525	-.4974853	.2539384
Blue Collar	-.238663	.3356898	-0.71	0.477	-.896603	.419277
numchild	.1813652	.0941909	1.93	0.054	-.0032455	.3659759
notrust	.9498877	.2048106	4.64	0.000	.5484664	1.351309
mentalhealthstatus	1.374517	.3280718	4.19	0.000	.7315077	2.017526
respect	-.2840406	.1952176	-1.45	0.146	-.6666601	.0985788
healthins	.3025551	.505751	0.60	0.550	-.6886986	1.293809
married	-.2849959	.3304872	-0.86	0.388	-.9327388	.362747
_cons	-1.575601	1.105249	-1.43	0.154	-3.741849	.5906459

# 4. The Impact of Paid and Unpaid Work Time



demand	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]
paidwork	.0118635	.0061831	1.92	0.055	-.0002553 .0239822
unpaidwork	.0093643	.0046546	2.01	0.044	.0002415 .0184872
female	.4942904	.1790779	2.76	0.006	.1433041 .8452767
age	-.0011301	.011718	-0.10	0.923	-.024097 .0218368
white	.3057731	.3228538	0.95	0.344	-.3270086 .9385549
hispanic	.0914703	.439234	0.21	0.835	-.7694125 .9523531
college	-.1165297	.1859653	-0.63	0.531	-.4810149 .2479555
familyincome					
2	-.0126237	.3670886	-0.03	0.973	-.7321041 .7068567
3	-.016102	.3761475	-0.04	0.966	-.7533376 .7211335
4	-.4470237	.3984544	-1.12	0.262	-1.22798 .3339325
5	-.3719884	.4436412	-0.84	0.402	-1.241509 .4975323
6	-.2420467	.4203978	-0.58	0.565	-1.066011 .5819179
sector					
Manufacturing	-.4237513	.4054985	-1.05	0.296	-1.218514 .3710112
Services	-.2832469	.3535346	-0.80	0.423	-.976162 .4096681
occup					
Low-skilled White	-.1180367	.1920197	-0.61	0.539	-.4943884 .2583149
Blue Collar	-.235731	.3357073	-0.70	0.483	-.8937052 .4222432
numchild	.1848114	.0947295	1.95	0.051	-.0008549 .3704778
notrust	.9461165	.205079	4.61	0.000	.544169 1.348064
mentalhealthstatus	1.381185	.3285178	4.20	0.000	.7373021 2.025068
respect	-.2846923	.1952358	-1.46	0.145	-.6673473 .0979628
healthins	.2987995	.5044737	0.59	0.554	-.6899508 1.28755
married	-.2751742	.3316533	-0.83	0.407	-.9252028 .3748544
_cons	-1.70105	1.162237	-1.46	0.143	-3.978993 .5768934

## 6. Conclusions



- Time use matters for mental health => both paid and unpaid work need to be considered;
- The impact of time use on mental health needs to be examined by gender: the impact of work time on psychological well-being is stronger for women than for men.
- Understanding the relationship between work and mental health helps inform social and labor policies in support of social welfare.