

# Is Feeling Bad a Luxury Problem?

June 29, 2012

## *Huffington Post:*

Health experts call these “first-world problems,” meaning the accumulated stresses of daily life and the negative emotions they arouse. There’s little doubt that worry and anger and sadness are linked to illness and mortality, right down to the cellular level, but isn’t this just the downside of privilege? Those of us who live in modern, industrialized nations may indeed be sickened by negative emotions, but surely this phenomenon is eclipsed by more pressing and serious health risks in the developing world, by “real” problems like famine, poverty, and war.

Or is it? The fact is, we don’t know. The question never been studied. That’s why University of Kansas psychological scientist Sarah Pressman and her colleagues decided to examine the emotion-health link in 142 countries across the planet, including many with persistent, daily risks to health and well-being, like prolonged civil war and drought. The scientists surveyed more than 150,000 people, ranging in age from 15 to 99, a representative sample of the world population participating in the Gallup World Poll. They queried these people about the specific negative emotions they had experienced the previous day — worry, sadness, boredom, depression, and so forth — and about positive emotions, including happiness, laughter, and love.

Read the whole story: [Huffington Post](#)