

Australian Unity Wellbeing Index Survey 28.0

**Report 28.0
November
2012**

Part A: The Report Chapter 10

“The Wellbeing of Australians – The Impact of Marriage on Wellbeing”

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Chapter 10: Marriage

We asked the following questions:

1. *I am going to ask about your marital status. Please indicate which of the following categories applies to you at the present time*
2. *How long have you been married/living together/separated/divorced/widowed?*
3. *Is this your first marriage/de facto relationship/separation/divorce?*

10.1 Marital status

We asked: *'Please indicate which of the following categories applies to you at the present time?'*

These results come from Table A10.1.

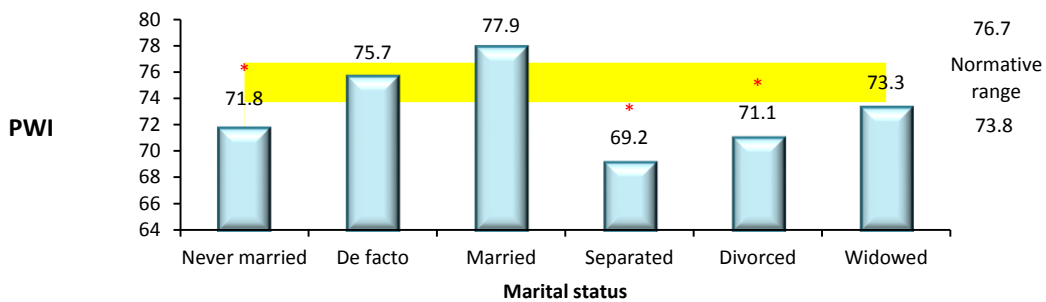


Figure 10.1: Marital status vs Personal Wellbeing Index

Married people exhibit the highest Wellbeing, followed by those in de facto relationships. The lowest wellbeing is reported by Separated people, who are coming to terms with the dissolution of their marriage. A divorce may signify some resolution to their marital problems, and a longer time for adaptation, explaining the slightly higher score for this group. The wellbeing of divorced people is no different from people who have never been married, whilst the wellbeing of widows falls just below the normal range. According to these figures, it is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all. However, this old adage is only true if your partner has been lost through death.

10.2 Length of marriage

We asked: *'How long have you been married?'*

10.2.1 Length of marriage x PWI

These results come from Table A10.2.

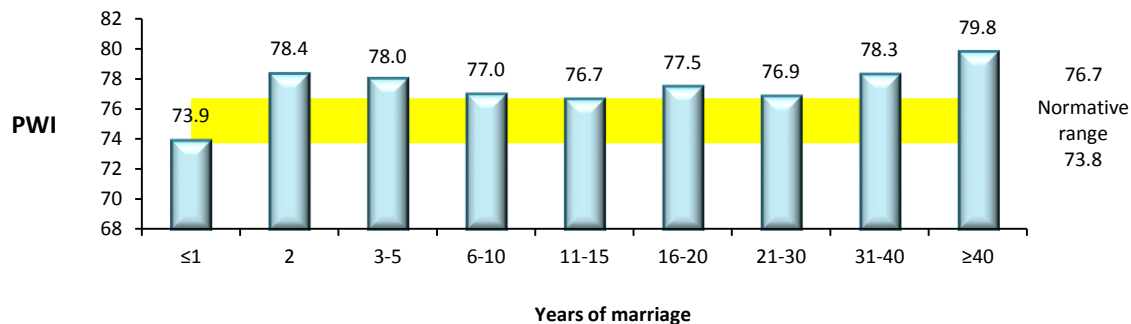


Figure 10.2.1: Length of marriage vs PWI

The wellbeing of married people varies only slightly over the course of their marriage, and it is almost always at the top of, or above the normal range. The single exception is ‘newlyweds’ who have been married for a year or less. Their wellbeing is still within the normal range, but falls at the lower end. Although not statistically significant due to this group only comprising 28 people, this finding is largely due to the change in financial circumstances that accompanies marriage. Although recently married people would have newly acquired access to their partner’s income, they also bear the costs of a wedding and potentially a new house, which could drain monetary resources. Further exploration into the wellbeing of the newlyweds group reveals that their lower overall wellbeing is largely driven by lower scores on two domains: Standard of Living and Safety.

10.2.2 Length of marriage x Standard of living

These results come from Table A10.2.1.

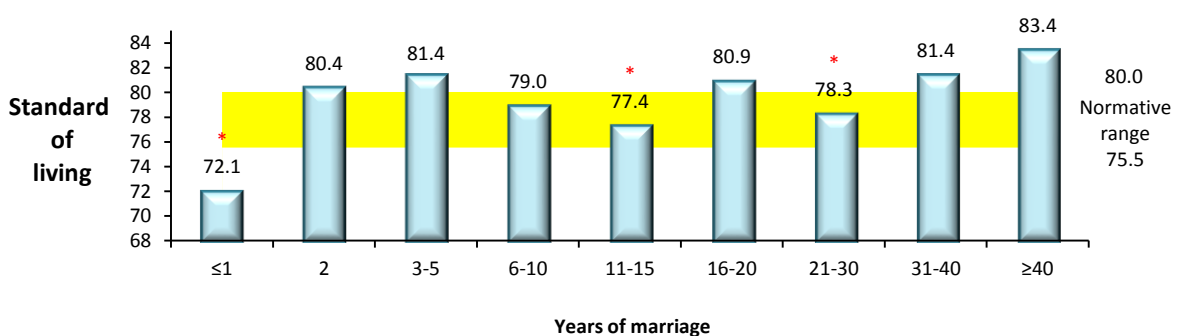


Figure 10.2.2: Length of marriage vs Standard of Living

For newlyweds, their Satisfaction with Standard of Living falls below the normal range for this domain. This finding supports the idea that the lower overall wellbeing scores for the newlywed group are related to their income, as the domain of Standard of living is closely associated with finances.

10.2.3 Length of marriage x Safety

These results come from Table A10.2.5.

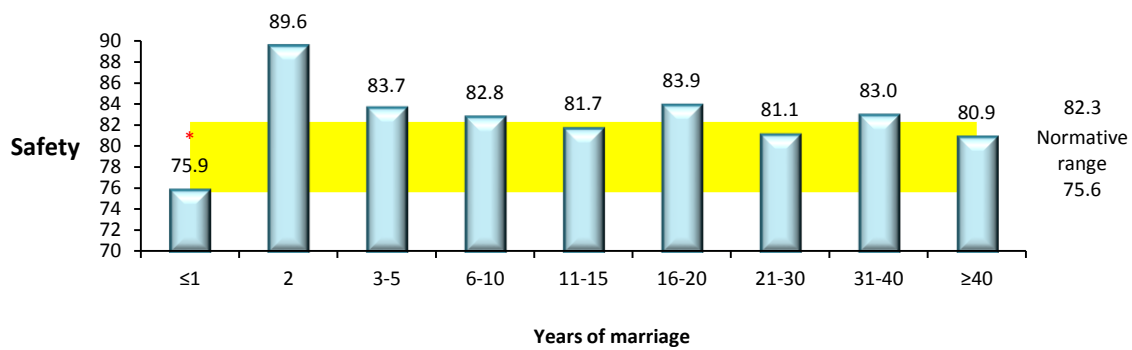


Figure 10.2.3: Length of marriage vs Satisfaction with Safety

Similarly, Satisfaction with Safety for newlyweds lies just within the normal range for this domain. This finding may be explained by the lifestyle changes that have likely occurred for this group, which may result in some general uncertainty and disruption to previous living arrangements. The anxiety associated with this lifestyle change may be reflected here as a threat to their Personal Safety.

10.2.4 Length of marriage x Gender

These results come from table A10.2.10.

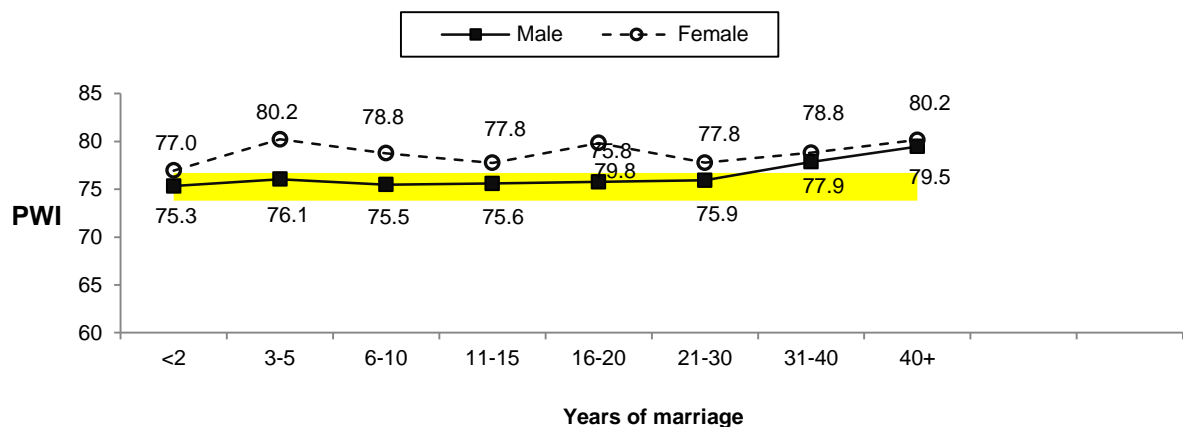


Figure 10.2.4: Years of marriage x Gender (Personal Wellbeing Index)

Married females consistently report higher wellbeing than married males. However, the average wellbeing for males and females does not change as a function of years married.

10.3 Married for the first time

We asked: "Is this your first marriage?"

These results come from Table A10.3.

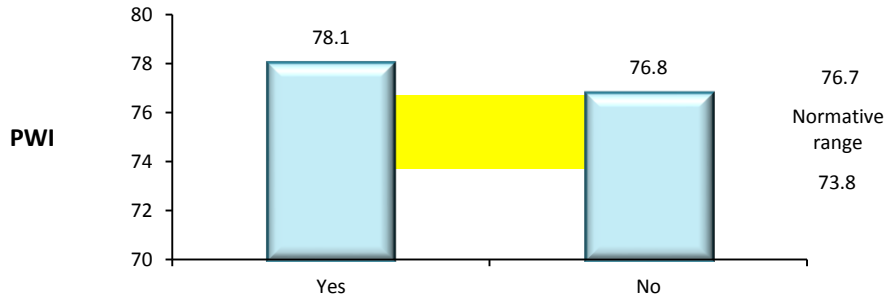


Figure 10.3.1: Is this your first marriage vs Personal Wellbeing Index

In general, whether or not a person is married for the first time does not affect their wellbeing. As long as a person is married, their wellbeing is above the normal range for the Australian population.

This finding suggests that the best way to recover from the drop in wellbeing experienced through separation or divorce is to re-marry. To further explore this idea, participants who reported that they had been married previously were considered as a new group called “Remarried”, and were compared to other marital status groups.

These results come from table A10.3.5.

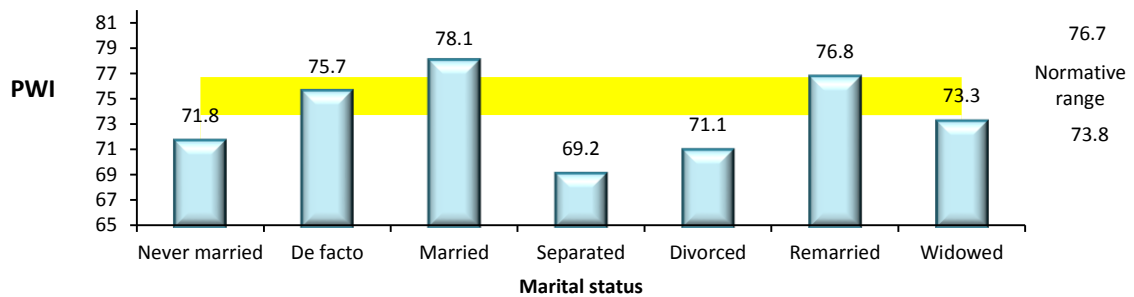
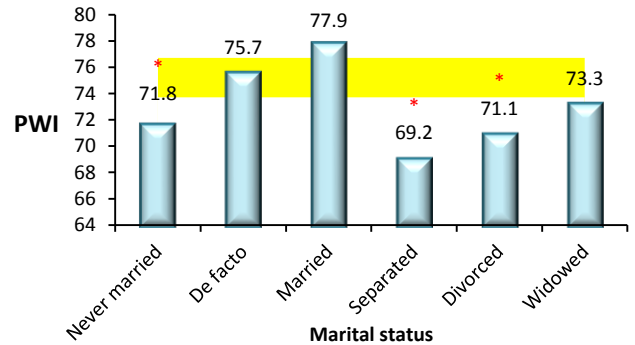


Figure 10.3.2: Marital status vs Personal Wellbeing Index

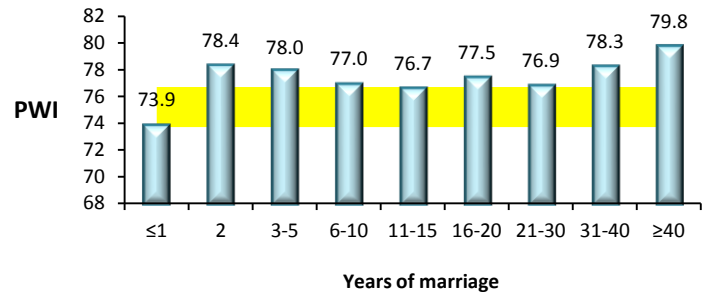
This figure confirms that being married, even if not for the first time, is associated with higher wellbeing. Remarried people report significantly higher wellbeing than those who are never married, separated or divorced.

Dot point summary for Marriage

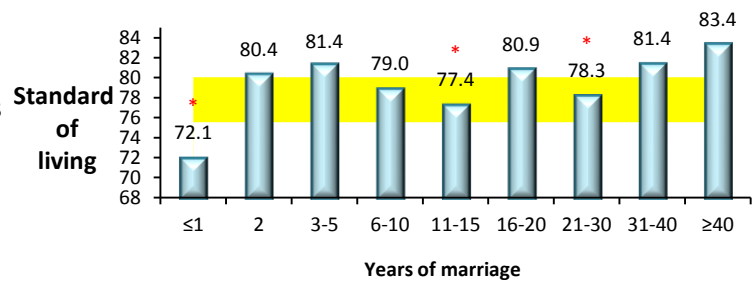
1. Married people exhibit the highest Wellbeing, followed by those in de facto relationships. The lowest wellbeing is reported by Separated people, who are coming to terms with the dissolution of their marriage.



2. The wellbeing of married people varies only slightly over the course of their marriage, and it is almost always at the top of, or above the normal range. The single exception is 'newlyweds' who have been married for a year or less. Their wellbeing is still within the normal range, but falls at the lower end. Although not statistically significant due to this group only comprising 28 people, this finding is largely due to the change in financial circumstances that accompanies marriage.



3. For newlyweds, their Satisfaction with Standard of Living falls below the normal range for this domain. This finding supports the idea that the lower overall wellbeing scores for the newlywed group are related to their income, as the domain of Standard of living is closely associated with finances.



4. Being married, even if not for the first time, is associated with higher wellbeing. Remarried people report significantly higher wellbeing than those who are never married, separated or divorced.

