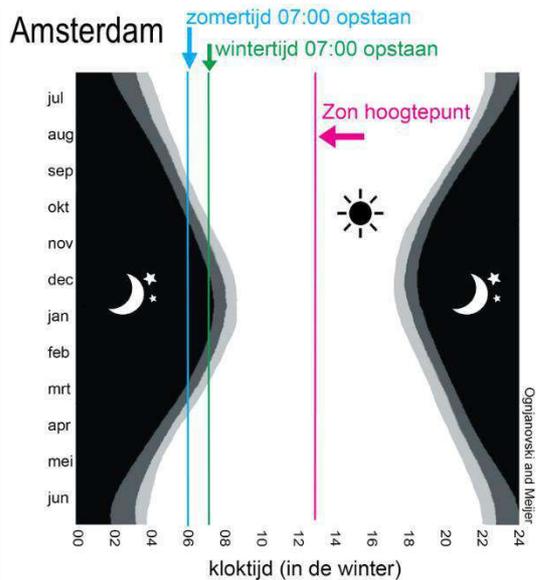




Apart from this, we now appreciate that the lack of morning light has a major impact upon the adjustment of our internal biological clock. This clock is present in the entire plant and animal kingdom, to fine-tune physiology and behavior to the daily light/dark cycle. In humans, even before we wake, this internal clock acts to increase blood pressure, metabolism, appetite and our cognitive abilities in anticipation of increased levels of activity.



The main way in which biological time is set to the geographical time is by exposure to light – primarily in the morning. Without this ‘light-kick’ in the morning, our biological clock drifts and our bodies are no longer able to perform according to the demands of the time of day. This holds not only for teenagers, who are known to possess “slow clocks”, but really for everyone.

Thus, introducing constant summertime is not as positive as one may think at a first sight. For at least 4 months in winter we will lack the correcting input of morning light resulting in a continuous jetlag; a classical miss match between our internal bodily

system and the geographical day. The result will be that the alarm clock will force us out of bed and then we will commute to work or go to school in a poorly adjusted state, which promotes fatigue and lowers performance. No doubt, this will increase the incidence of traffic accidents in the morning. Teenagers are especially vulnerable to this disruption, as their clocks are slow. On non-school days teenagers tend to sleep in and fail to experience morning light, so they miss the corrective influence of light. This will worsen with continuous summertime. Apart from these immediate consequences, scientific research has revealed that ongoing distortion of our biological clocks leads to a wide variety of diseases, including metabolic abnormalities, cardiovascular disease and, most of all, an increased vulnerability to depression.

With the introduction of artificial light about 100 years ago, we have gradually adopted a life style that is remote from natural rhythms in our environment. We humans feel that we can do what we like, when we like and can act independently of our biology or time of day. On the other hand, it has become clear from fairly recent research is that a properly timed biological clock is essential for good overall mental and physical health. Why would we act to risk sleep disorders, fatigue depression and good health, just to obtain a longer evening, by adopting “summertime” rather than “wintertime”? It is time we started to live in harmony with the natural world and not think that we can succeed by fighting against it.