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Want to earn more? Then you've got to be tall and fat

May 17, 2009 - 3:59PM

Tall people really do get ahead.

Australian researchers have found that tall workers earn more than their shorter colleagues, especially among men.

A man who is six foot can expect to take home a "wage premium" of almost $1000 a year.

The boffins paint a bleak picture for the vertically-challenged, but there's good news for chubby workers.

Overweight people actually earn more than their skinny workmates.

Researcher Andrew Leigh, an economist at the Australian National University, said a factor in the tall men's pay perk was that they were more capable at some physical tasks, such as reaching the top shelf.

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"Beyond that is basically discrimination," Professor Leigh said.

"We tend to think that tall people are more powerful and smarter, even when they're not necessarily."

Professor Leigh, who stands at 180.34 centimetres, said it was unfortunate that society was biased towards taller people. There was not much short people could do about it.

"At the moment they can only try and stand on a box."

Professor Leigh crunched the numbers on the height, weight and pay of thousands of people around the country, in an Australian first research effort.

He found that an extra 10cm in height meant three per cent higher wages for men, and two per cent higher wages for women.

It was a different story when it came to weight. Fat men earn five per cent more than their trimmer colleagues.

And thin women don't earn higher wages.

Professor Leigh said it was possible that being overweight had become so common that it was no longer a problem for workers.

AAP

This story was found at: ***http://www.smh.com.au/national/want-to-earn-more-then-youve-got-to-be-tall-and-fat-20090517-b76o.html***

ABC News

Study finds tall people earn more

By Clarissa Thorpe

Posted Sun May 17, 2009 12:15pm AEST
Updated 6 hours 18 minutes ago

New Australian research has found a person's height can have an impact on the amount of money they earn.

The study by Professor Andrew Leigh from the ANU and Dr Michael Kortt from Sydney University found that people who are six feet (1.83 metres) tall can earn $950 each year compared to those of average height.

This means being 5 centimetres taller than average can increase a worker's pay packet by 1.5 per cent.

Researchers compared a range of body sizes from Australian adults with pay levels, and found that being taller had more of an impact on men.

"We see this effect both for men and women, but it's strongest for men," he said.

"For example, an extra two inches or five centimetres of height tends to get a man another $1,000 a year and the effect for women is a little smaller.

ANU researchers compared a range of body sizes with pay levels. (ABC TV)

- ***Audio:** Research finds height can have impact on pay packets (ABC News)*
- ***Map:** Canberra 2600*
- ***Related Link:** Report: Does size matter in Australia?*

"The wage gain from another 2 inches (5cm) of height is approximately equal to wage gain from one more year of labour market experience."

Professor Leigh says it is not clear why height has made such a difference in wages.

However the research did not find any impact on wage levels for people who were obese or overweight.

"This is in contrast with previous studies that used older data from the United States and Germany and found that people with higher BMI scores earned lower wages," Professor Leigh said.

"It is difficult to know whether this is due to cross-country differences, or changes over time. Perhaps Australians are less likely to discriminate against overweight and obese workers than the other nations.

"Or maybe we cannot find an effect because we are using more recent data than the other studies, and the majority of workers are now overweight or obese."

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Link between height and income

The Advertiser

LAUREN NOVAK
May 18, 2009 12:01am

RESEARCH has proved size does matter - at least when it comes to pay.

An extra 5cm in height can add about $950 to the average man's salary, Australian National University researchers have found. ANU economist Professor Andrew Leigh said the wage gain from the extra height was equivalent to the reward for another year of labour market experience.

"We found that taller people earn more, with the effect being strongest for men," Professor Leigh said.

"The average man in our sample is five feet 10 inches tall (177cm).

"Our estimates suggest that if he was six feet tall (182cm) he would earn another 1.5 per cent, or around $950, per year."

HAS YOUR HEIGHT AFFECTED YOUR EARNING CAPACITY? Have your say in the comment box below.

"However, we found that the effect of height on women's wages was smaller than for men and not statistically relevant."

In contrast, the researchers found no connection between pay and weight.

"We were surprised to find that there seemed to be no wage penalty to being overweight or obese," Professor Leigh said.

Bartender Jensen Tjhung and his waiter mate Daniel Twomey fit the researchers findings.

Mr Tjhung measures about 187cm and earns up to $22 an hour while Mr Twomey measures about 154cm and earns $15 an hour.

Neither man thought size should make a difference to employers.

"I thought it would have been the other way around because shorter people have to work harder," Mr Twomey said.

"I find it (the research) hard to believe."

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Study finds tall people at top of wages ladder

May 17, 2009 - 3:04PM

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Tall people earn higher wages than their vertically-challenged counterparts while being obese does not mean a slimmed-down pay packet, according to a new Australian study.

Researchers found a strong link between wages and height, particularly for men, with each additional 10 centimetres of height adding three per cent to hourly wages.

The "height premium" was two per cent per 10 centimetres for women, researchers from the University of Sydney and Canberra's Australian National University (ANU) found.

They calculated that every five centimetres above the average height of 178 centimetres boosted a male's wages by the equivalent of an extra year's experience in the labour force.

"This result holds constant across a number of other factors that also affect wages, such as age, race, family background, experience and education," said ANU professor Andrew Leigh.

The researchers, who examined health and income data from almost 20,000 Australians, also found that being overweight did not mean a lighter pay packet - in contrast to previous studies.

"We were surprised to find that there seemed to be no wage penalty to being overweight or obese in the Australian labour market," Leigh said.

"This is in contrast with previous studies that used older data from the United States and Germany and found that people with higher (body mass index) earned lower wages."

He said one explanation may be that because overweight Australians were now in the majority, they did not face discrimination in the workplace.

AFP

This story was found at: ***http://www.theage.com.au/national/study-finds-tall-people-at-top-of-wages-ladder-20090517-b76b.html***

Study: Tall People Make More Money

Australian researchers say height, pay correlate

Updated: Sunday, 17 May 2009, 5:40 PM MDT
Published : Sunday, 17 May 2009, 4:31 PM MDT

MELBOURNE - A study by scholars in Australia found that tall people earn higher wages than their shorter counterparts.

According to the new research, there is a strong link between wages and height. For each four inches a man is taller, he earns 3 percent more hourly pay. In women, there's a 2 percent pay hike.

Australia National University professor Andrew Leigh says that the rule holds true across other factors such as age, race, family background, experience, and education.

For every two inches above the average height of 5'10", scholars say a man's wage gets a boost equivalent to an extra year of work experience.

The study looked at data from 20,000 Australians. It also found that members of the work force who were obese or overweight were not penalized in wages, like past data concluded.

Researchers believe that's because fat Australians are now in the majority, and weight discrimination is not as prevalent as it used to be.

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Short changed

Tall people are always head and shoulders above short arses. They stand tall when lesser men are not even noticed. Ever heard of a man standing short? Or of a short, dark and handsome man?

Whether we're short or tall, we've always known that tall people are superior, and now we know that this superiority earns them a higher wage. Professor Andrew Leigh of the ANU and Dr Michael Kortt of Sydney University have used the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics Survey results of 2006 and 2007, when height was a survey question, to put a figure on the monetary value of tallness.

They found that each 10 centimetres in a man's height gives a 3 per cent increase in his hourly rate, which means that a man who is six foot in the old money or 183 centimetres in the new earns $948 a year more than a fellow who's shorter by two inches or five centimetres. As a six footer I know it has always been convenient to be six foot rather than five foot 10, and while I knew this should be worth money I was unaware that it was.

The difference in the earnings of men extends up and down the height scale, making the disparity more than interesting as the heights vary more. The wage differences for women of different heights was insignificant, by the way.

In my column in The Herald today I write of my belief that the biases for tallness and against shortness are implanted in childhood, which ensures that they will be a powerful influence perhaps all our lives. The exclamations that greet the sight of a growing boy spell success for him and failure for the boy not growing tall. "Hasn't he grown!" This ingrained superiority and inferiority would be enough to ensure a difference in confidence and presentation in adulthood, but, cruelly, the mere difference in physical presence adds another dimension. Then, of course, there's the little man syndrome that at once dismisses and ridicules short men.

The study by the two academics is the first time I've seen confirmation of discrimination against short men, or men who are not tall, and the fact that is can be measured in dollars is extraordinary.

Are you a perpetrator or a victim of height discrimination? Tell us your story.

Posted By: **Jeff Corbett** on 18/05/2009 4:33:30 PM | Comments (11)

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Tall, Dark and Handsome. Now add to that, Rich. Wow count me in.
Posted by **Buell** on 18/05/2009 9:05:43 PM

Good point, Buell.
Posted by Jeff Corbett on 19/05/2009 8:43:37 AM

A disgrace in logic. The vast majority of extreme geniuses are short-arses; especially those of an evil, tyrranical note: Napoleon, Hitler, Stalin. The more happily productive geniuses were predominantly dwarfish: Picasso, Mozart... in fact, it is very difficult to think of any of those tall, cumbersome dimwits who are of any interest at all... probably because of all the empty attention they received whilst growing up.
Posted by **ted** on 19/05/2009 12:12:26 AM

How about we factor-in the efficiencies of being tall? A tall person might be able to reach the top shelf easily, and the short person might have to go and get a ladder. In a workplace like a chemist shop, this could be a quantifiable efficiency, as well as an OH&S issue.
Posted by **Jess** on 19/05/2009 6:02:43 AM

But the tall person will put his back at risk bending too far to get to the bottom shelf.
Posted by Jeff Corbett on 19/05/2009 8:45:41 AM

This is one example of something that all people everywhere experience [as both perpetrator and recipient] every day : judgemental heuristics, otherwise known as 'rules of thumb'. We use these things every day to allow us to manage the massive overload of information we encounter. 500 years ago, people lived much more rural lifestyles, and travelled much, much less, often never leaving their local villages. They interacted with comparatively few people (and things), and had the time to be able to get to really know other people. [That's why we are genetically predisposed to be suspicious of strangers ~ back then, strangers were rare, and potentially threatening]. These days, we meet more people in a week than our ancestors did in a year, and we simply have to have short cut rules to let us handle the info. Problem : the 'rules' ain't necessarily valid! Some examples are : "tall men are more successful", "people with tattoos are criminal bikies", "young blokes wearing hooded pullovers will mug you". This happens unconsciously, every minute, every day. We pigeonhole people, because we have to, and once pigeonholed (rightly or wrongly) it

unconsciously, every minute, every day. We pigeonhole people, because we have to, and once pigeonholed (rightly or wrongly) it can be VERY hard to change your pigeonholing. Everybody knows a 'whining complainer', an 'arrogant jerk' or a 'pushy bastard'. Are these people also good parents, valuable employees, generous volunteers, worthwhile citizens? Who knows? In the absence of ANY info, we use physical attributes sich as height, weight, hair length, evidence of tattoos, etc as our rules of thumb. Fair? Not really. Is it happenning every single minute of every day? ABSOLUTELY. The good thing is, you CAN control the 'image' you project, and you life will be better for it [thank you Seth Godin].
Posted by **Abundance** on 19/05/2009 9:10:37 AM
Not if you squat with the knees Jeff. Another OH&S lesson for you.
Posted by **Jess** on 19/05/2009 9:19:29 AM
Ahh Abundance, this is all quite true, but alot of us don't like to Conform to what society expects. But even non-comformists look at others and judge. In a suit, tall handsome must be a nice guy. And can't that be a trap.
Posted by **Buell** on 19/05/2009 9:25:59 AM
i think the reason that tall people earn more than shorties is that the short kids cant see the blackboard so they dont do as well at school then with lesser qualifications they end up in a lower paying job. lol
Posted by **chameleon** on 19/05/2009 10:02:41 AM
Yep. The devil is a well dressed white man, as they say.
Posted by **Abundance** on 19/05/2009 11:30:11 AM
Interesting story. Jeff at 183cm you consider your not being paid enough for your height...OR the alternate argument...they could sack you, and employ a midget...just think of the savings. I wonder what Danny Devito and Tom Cruise think ? At 6' 3" (OK 6' 2 1/2) I always believed I wasn't paid enough, but I never thought it was my height. This story reminds me of your previous post "Empty Presentation" as it both raises the issue of people's perception.
Posted by **Colin O.** on 19/05/2009 11:36:02 AM
From 'Full Metal Jacket': Drill Instructor: "How tall are you recruit?" Rct: "Five foot seven, SIR!" Instructor: "**** me! I didn't know they stacked **** that high!"
Posted by **Porky Pig** on 19/05/2009 12:30:34 PM

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Printed May 18, 2009 01:01am AEST

Correlation between height and income no tall story

Matthew Clayfield | *May 18, 2009*

Article from: The Australian

THERE may be no correlation between a person's weight and income, researchers have found, but give or take five centimetres in height and it's another story.

According to a study by Australian National University economist Andrew Leigh and University of Sydney public health researcher Michael Kortt, every five centimetres of height are worth about $950 per annum to the average man.

"The wage gain from another 2 inches (5cm) of height is approximately equal to wage gain from one more year of labour market experience," Professor Leigh said.

"For example, the average man in our sample is 5 feet 10 inches (178cm) tall. Our estimates suggest that if he was 6 feet tall (183cm), he would earn another 1.5 per cent, or around $950 per year."

He said the findings, which are based on data from a nationally representative sample, are constant across other wage-influencing factors including age, race, experience and education.

"However, we found the effect of height on women's wages was smaller than for men, and not statistically significant," he said.

Also looked at was the relationship between wages and body mass index, but no wage penalty to overweight or obese workers was found.

"This is in contrast with previous studies that used older data from the United States and Germany and found that people with higher BMI scores earned lower wages," Professor Leigh said.

Measuring in at 193cm, Sydneysider Brendon Atkinson laughed off the idea he was worth $2850 more than the study's "average man".

But he said there was some merit to the idea that taller men often made more of an impact in the workplace.

"I think a lot of the time taller people can be perceived to be more assertive and confident," he said. "And sometimes people look up to people who have a larger mass. You tend to find that more people confide in you, which can certainly have its benefits in the workplace."

But Mr Atkinson, who works in sales and marketing, said he didn't think it was possible to put a dollar figure on every centimetre.

"Some people are tall but self-conscious and don't get very far ... Some people are short and aggressive and make a lot of money."

Professor Leigh and Dr Kortt found that 36 per cent of Australian workers were overweight while 22 per cent were obese.

"Perhaps Australians are less likely to discriminate against overweight and obese workers than the other nations," Professor Leigh said.

"Or maybe ... we are using more recent data than the other studies and the majority of workers are now overweight or obese."

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REUTERS

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Taller men earn more, Australian researchers say

Sun May 17, 2009 7:55am EDT

SYDNEY (Reuters) - Being tall can make a real difference to a man's pocket, Australian researchers said on Sunday, with five centimeters of extra height worth around A$950 (US$712) in additional annual earnings.

Australian National University economists carried out a survey of Australian adults' earnings and while they found that being overweight made no difference, height did -- at least where males were concerned.

The average man in the sample was five foot ten inches tall, but data showed that if he was six feet tall he could expect to earn 1.5 percent more.

The researchers said this worked out at A$950 a year in extra earnings on average.

"Using data from a nationally representative sample of Australian adults, we found that taller people earn more, with the effect being strongest for men," economist Andrew Leigh said in a statement announcing the findings.

"This result holds constant across a number of other factors that also affect wages, such as age, race, family background, experience, and education. However, we found that the effect of height on women's wages was smaller than for men, and not statistically significant."

An additional five centimeters of height was approximately equivalent to a year's extra experience in terms of a man's additional wages, the researchers said.

(A$1=US$0.75)

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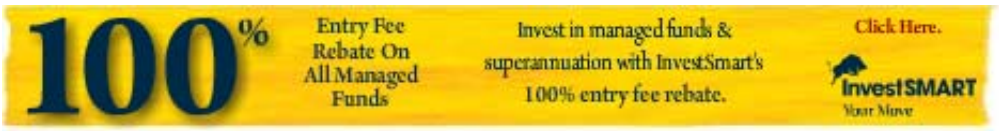

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It pays to be tall, but weight is no earnings barrier, study reveals

Ellie Harvey
May 18, 2009 - 12:02AM

STANDING just five centimetres taller than your colleagues could earn you $950 more a year, a study that links wages with height shows.

The results, for Australian men at least, show men of average height around 1.77 metres, earn about $950 more than their counterparts at 1.72 metres, but about 1.5 per cent less than men 1.83 metres tall. This wage gain is equal to an extra year of work experience.

It is the first time body size and wage relationships have been estimated in Australia, as far as researchers - Professor Andrew Leigh from the Australian National University, and Dr Michael Kortt from the University of Sydney - know.

The study was based on the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey, running since 2001, but only in 2006 and 2007 were respondents asked about their height and weight.

Professor Leigh said their findings could either be attributed to the increased productivity, that is, height is advantageous because a person can reach higher shelves, for example, as a factory worker. In some lines of work, such as modelling and elite athletes, success is more obviously correlated with height.

Discrimination is the other explanation, he offers. "We know from psychology that [people] are more likely to think that tall people are powerful and intelligent. These subconscious biases are probably playing their way into the labor market as well," he said.

However, heading overseas may be the best way to cash in on height as returns on height in Australia are less than that of the US and Britain.

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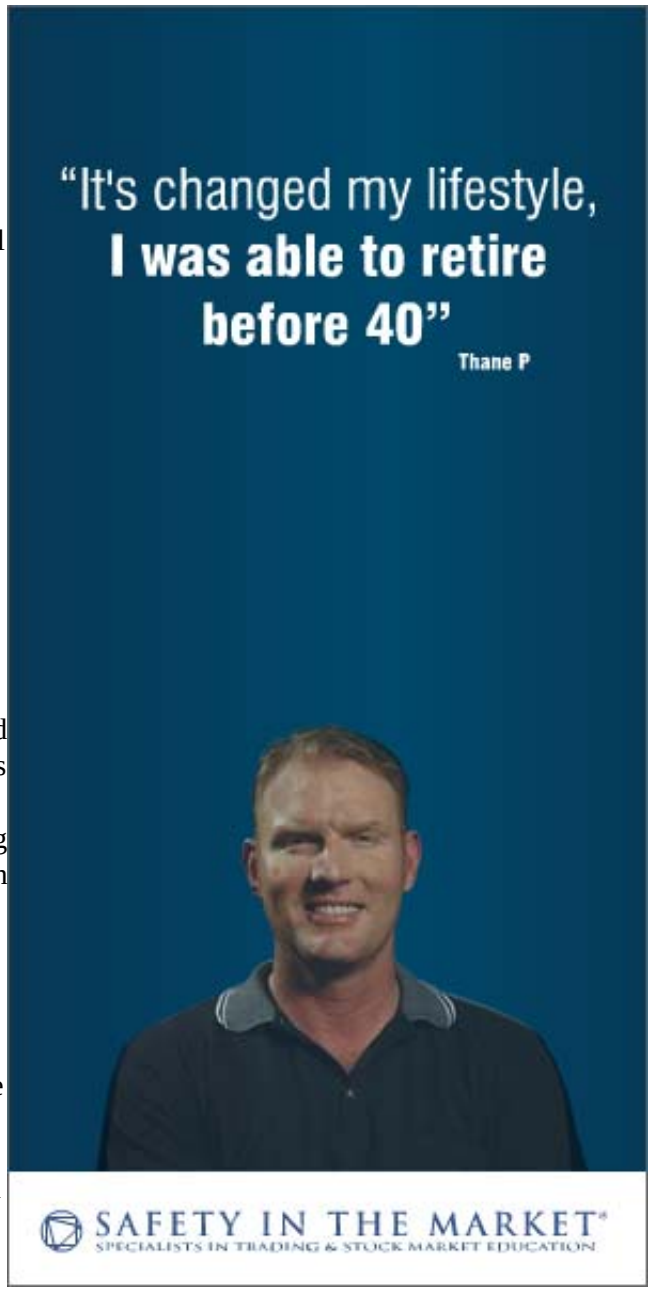

The results were not statistically significant for women. Professor Leigh said this is likely because there is "more going on in determining the earnings of women". Women usually take more breaks from the labour market, fewer women work, and their arrangements are often more complicated.

fewer women work, and their arrangements are often more complicated.

But the big shock came with the absent relationship between weight and wages. Professor Leigh said they were "startled" by their finding. "We had expected that there would be a big penalty to being overweight or obese and we just didn't see it."

He suggested that either Australians are less likely to discriminate against overweight and obese workers than the other nations, or that so many workers are now overweight or obese that the difference between them and their skinnier colleagues is no longer noticed.

This story was found at: ***http://www.smh.com.au/national/it-pays-to-be-tall-but-weight-is-no-earnings-barrier-study-reveals-20090517-b7et.html***

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NEWS

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By VIKKI THOMAS

Published: 18 May 2009

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FAT men earn FIVE per cent MORE than their trimmer colleagues, a shock study has shown.

Researchers Down Under found it was possible that being chubby had become the norm and was no longer a problem in the office.

The study is the first time body size and wage relationships have been studied in Australia.

Professor Andrew Leigh from the Australian National University, and Dr Michael Kortt from the University of Sydney based the study on the household, income and labour dynamics.

Workers with extra height are also higher earners than their shorter colleagues, especially among men.

A man who is six foot can expect to take home a “wage premium” of almost £500 a year.

In some lines of work, such as modelling and elite athletes, success is more obviously correlated with height.

Discrimination is the other explanation, Prof Leigh suggests.

He said: "We know from psychology that people are more likely to think that tall people are powerful and intelligent.

"These subconscious biases are probably playing their way into the labour market as well."

Fat cat ... overweight men earn more

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Taller men earn more money

Tall men earn more money than their shorter colleagues, according to research.

Last Updated: 4:19PM BST 18 May 2009

A six foot tall man could expect 1.5 per cent more than a workmate who is five foot 10, according to the new study

The study, from the University of Sydney and the Australian National University, Canberra, compared the pay grades of 20,000 Australians with other data such as weight and height.

According to research, a taller man earns more money than shorter colleagues Photo: GETTY

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They found that size matters when it came to earning money, although the "pay premium" was greater for men than women.

Andrew Leigh, an ANU economist and one of the authors of the report, said: "We found that taller people earn more, with the effect being strongest for men. For example, the average man in our sample is five feet ten inches tall. Our estimates suggest that if he were six feet tall, he would earn another 1.5 per cent, or around $950 (£470) per year.

"The wage gain from another two inches is approximately equal to one more year of labour market experience. However, we found that the effect of height on women's wages was smaller than for men, and not statistically significant."

Women would need an extra four inches to get a similar boost in earnings over their colleagues.

Professor Leigh said more research was needed to discover why being tall was an advantage.

"Perhaps this has to do with status - having greater respect for taller people that might be inadvertently leading to higher wages," he said.

"Perhaps it is because of discrimination - shorter people getting the same treatment in the labour market women and minorities have experienced in the past."

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thewest.com.au The West Australian

Tuesday, 19 May 2009 | 04:07 AM

Tall men earn $1000 more than shorties

18th May 2009, 5:30 WST

Australian researchers have found that tall workers earn more than their shorter colleagues, especially among men.

A man who is taller than 1.8 metres can expect to take home a “wage premium“ of almost $1000 a year.

The boffins paint a bleak picture for the vertically-challenged, but there’s good news for chubby workers.

Overweight people actually earn more than their skinny workmates.

Researcher Andrew Leigh, an economist at the Australian National University, said a factor in the tall men’s pay perk was that they were more capable at some physical tasks, such as reaching the top shelf.

“Beyond that is basically discrimination,” Prof Leigh said. “We tend to think that tall people are more powerful and smarter, even when they’re not necessarily.”

Prof Leigh, who stands at 180.34 centimetres, said it was unfortunate that society was biased towards taller people. There was not much short people could do about it.

“At the moment they can only try and stand on a box.”

Prof Leigh crunched the numbers on the height, weight and pay of thousands of people around the country, in an Australian first research effort.

He found than an extra 10cm in height meant 3 per cent higher wages for men, and 2 per cent higher wages for women.

It was a different story when it came to weight. Fat men earn 5 per cent more than their trimmer colleagues.

And thin women don't earn higher wages.

Prof Leigh said it was possible that being overweight had become so common that it was no longer a problem for workers.

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Tall men earn more than shorter colleagues, research claims.

Taller men earn more money than their shorter counterparts because they are seen as more intelligent and powerful, a study found.

By Richard Alleyne, Science Correspondent
Published: 4:27PM BST 22 Jul 2009

An extra couple of inches can add nearly £500 a year to a man's salary – a pay rise equivalent to an extra 12 months' experience.

But stature made less of a difference in determining how well women were rewarded for their work, the research suggested.

A 6ft tall man can expect 1.5 per cent more than a workmate who is 5ft 10 ins Photo: GETTY

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A 6ft tall man can expect 1.5 per cent more than a workmate who is 5ft 10 ins. However, female workers would need an advantage of 4 ins to get a similar boost in earnings over colleagues.

The results come from a study of nearly 7,000 men and women in Australia but back up previous studies in Britain and America which show evidence of height boosting salaries.

Professor Andrew Leigh, who led the study at the Australian National University, said: "We found that taller people earn more, with the effect being strongest for men.

"For example, the average man in our sample is 5 feet 10 inches tall.

"Our estimates suggest that if he was 6 feet tall, he would earn another 1.5 per cent, or around 950 dollars (£470), per year.

"The wage gain from another two inches of height is approximately equal to wage gain from one more year of labour market experience."

He said that while size could be an advantage in some jobs like a taller shop assistant being able to reach a top shelf without a ladder, or a slimmer construction worker being able to move around the building site more rapidly.

But he felt that the most likely explanation was down to feelings that taller people commanded more respect and discrimination against short people.

"Perhaps this has to do with status – having greater respect for taller people might be inadvertently leading to higher wages," he said.

"Or perhaps it is because of discrimination, with shorter people getting the same treatment in the labour market as women and minorities have experienced in the past."

The study also found fat people no longer earn less than their skinnier colleagues – possibly because so many people are now overweight.

"We were surprised to find that there seemed to be no wage penalty to being overweight or obese in the Australian labour market," said Professor Leigh.

He said that taller boys may be more confident as height affects things like participating in clubs and athletics, and those confidence-boosting activities as a youth lead to earning power as an adult.

Of course, there are exceptions, but the experts say if you compare two large groups of people who are similar in every respect but height, the average pay for the taller group will be higher.

However, Bill Gates and Warren Buffett, both of whom have held the title of the world's richest man, measure about 5-foot-10-inches in height, so there is hope for the more diminutive businessman.

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Short? Moi? It's just another media tall story . . .

Size really does matter in French politics, says Damian Corless

'No one must be taller than the president." That was the suggestion of a journalist to workers at a factory in Normandy who were selected to crowd around France's pint-sized prima donna, Nicolas Sarkozy, during a recent visit. "Yes. That's right," came the reply.

Before the president arrived at the car-parts factory, his aides arranged that he would be surrounded by shorter-than-your-average workers in order to enhance his standing. A Belgian TV crew spotted what was going on and asked some probing questions. The factory's trade union disclosed that one of the issues agreed in advance of the visit was that only short workers would be allowed to feature in photos of the president.

The Elysee Palace issued an indignant denial, claiming that insinuations the workers had been vetted for size were "totally far-fetched and grotesque", but no one was buying that. He's shown form before: in June, the 5ft 5in president was photographed standing on tippy toes while attending a D-Day ceremony in the company of the much taller Barack Obama and Gordon Brown. Sarkozy's taste for stacked heels has been contrasted with the post-nuptual preference of supermodel wife Carla Bruni for flat shoes.

According to the author Jean Pierre Friedman, who has written extensively about Sarkozy, the president "has a complex about his height that has given him a sense of inferiority, so he has to prove himself. Take a look at the way he walks. It's very peculiar. It almost seems as though he has lifts in his shoes that seem to disrupt his balance".

Sarkozy has been damned by critics who accuse him of suffering a "Napoleon complex" in regard to his height. The accusation is unfair to Napoleon Bonaparte, who was actually of average height for his day. It's thought that the self-made Emperor earned his reputation as a shorty because he surrounded himself with extra-lanky Imperial guards. But the slur has stuck, and Sarkozy has been variously labelled "Nicoleon" and "Bonaparte in a suit".

Ireland's own "Bonaparte in a suit" was Charles J Haughey, the subject of one biography cruelly entitled Short Fellow. There have been other short fellows who've scaled the heights in this country. Commenting on his lack of inches, Senator Fergal Quinn memorably said: "I was never particularly high." Referring to his RTE colleague, the late sports-caster and Olympic high-jumper, Gay Byrne once said: "I'd like to be as tall as Brendan O'Reilly."

Hollywood has given us no shortage of short fellows who stretched their talents all the way to the top. In the 1957 movie Boy On A Dolphin, Sophia Loren had to do her acting in a trench in order to appear smaller than her leading man, Alan Ladd, an individual who, by his own admission, had "the face of an ageing choirboy and the build of an undernourished featherweight". Ladd's lack of inches -- he detested his nickname "Tiny" at school -- didn't hamper his career. He went on to make The Deep Six, which required him to stand on orange boxes in order to appear taller than his fellow actors.

Although hardly a shorty at 5ft 8in, Humphrey Bogart would always try to stand one step higher than his leading ladies for photo opportunities. Also standing at 5ft 8in, Rod Stewart is currently dating the much taller Penny Lancaster (6ft 1in), who has been known to obligingly step down off the kerb in order to show off her partner in a more flattering light.

After divorcing pint-sized Tom Cruise in 2001, 5ft 11in Nicole Kidman famously quipped: "At least I can wear high heels now." Cruise subsequently married again above his height, and observers noticed that his wedding snaps gave the distinct impression that he was a good deal taller (he's not) than new wife Katie Holmes.

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The notion that small men carry a chip on both shoulders may seem like an age-old cliché, but it has been borne out by a study published last year. Researchers found that men in the region of 5ft 4in were much more likely to harbour jealous feelings than those measuring 6ft and over. Prof Abraham Buunk of the University of Groningen said that women find tall men more physically

attractive, they tend to earn higher wages and are more likely to have children.

Other studies convey more bad news for short men. One report states that the vertically challenged are more likely to be victims of bullying, leading to low self-esteem, which leads in turn to low achievement. And there's worse. Being short can have a detrimental effect on your success in business.

A survey by Fortune magazine of the 500 richest industrialists in the United States (nearly all men) found that most were three inches taller than the average person. A full 30pc of the most successful bosses were 6ft 2in or taller, compared with less than 4pc reaching that height in the general population. The same survey found that only 3pc of company bosses were under 5ft 7in in height.

A more recent survey found that an extra couple of inches can add an extra €800 to a man's annual salary. The research, conducted in America, Britain and Australia, found that a male standing at 6ft tall will on average earn 1.5pc more than a workmate who is a mere two inches shorter. Professor Andrew Leigh, who conducted the research, said: "The wage gain from another two inches of height is approximately equal to one extra year on the job. It seems a matter of status. Taller people command greater status, respect and wages."

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Primary sources

John Crace sifts the best new research: Eduardo and how to spot foul play; the thin line between hate crime and harassment; the sweet smell of the stink bomb

John Crace
The Guardian, Friday 18 September 2009

A larger | smaller

The psychologist who tackles football's divers

Maybe for once the Arsenal coach Arsène Wenger can be persuaded to keep his mouth shut. The "yes he did, no he didn't" Eduardo-diving controversy might soon be a thing of the past if Uefa reads new research from the University of Portsmouth. Dr Paul Morris, an expert on the embodiment of emotions and intentions in the department of psychology, has studied footballers' behaviour on the pitch and says referees could be helped to spot the tell-tale signs of cheating, sometimes even in the split seconds in which they occur. The research shows that there are distinct actions that footballers use – either individually or in any combination – when faking a fall. These include: clutching their body where they haven't been hit, taking an extra roll when they hit the ground, taking fully controlled strides after being tackled before falling, and holding both arms up in the air, with open palms, chest thrust out, legs bent at the knee in an "archer's bow" position. "In most dishonest tackles the deception is revealed in the timing and co-ordination of the behaviours," said Dr Morris. Eduardo please note.

A fine line between race hate and harassment

New research by Dr Neil Chakraborti and Jon Garland of the University of Leicester's department of criminology challenges existing stereotypes about the nature and impact of hate crime. Though the term conjures up images of violent acts committed by hate-fuelled extremists, the research suggests that many hate crimes are in fact lower-level forms of harassment committed by so-called "normal" people who may not necessarily "hate" their victim. It's hard to know whether to be pleased that most Brits don't feel that strongly about a person's race, or disturbed that even though they aren't that bothered, they still want to have a pop.

Back to the womb with hydrogen sulphide

Kids who let off stink bombs in class may be in need of counselling sessions rather than detention. Speaking to a medical conference on hydrogen sulphide in Shanghai, Dr Ray Carson of the University of Leicester said that the gas, most commonly associated with stink bombs, plays an important role in relaxing smooth muscle in the body. So far it has been shown to relax the uterus and can be produced by the placenta, uterine tissue and the amniotic sac. So for kids, the smell could be the equivalent of a Proustian madeleine.

If it's on video, it must be true

Dr Kimberley Wade from the department of psychology at the University of Warwick has found that fake video evidence can dramatically alter people's perceptions of events. In the study, Dr Wade found that almost 50% of people shown fake footage of an event they witnessed first hand were prepared to believe the video version rather than what they actually saw. The research team filmed 60 subjects, unknowingly seated next to a member of the research team, as they took part in a computerised gambling task. After

the session, the video footage was doctored to make it look as if the researcher was cheating. One third of the subjects were simply told that the person sat next to them was suspected of cheating. Another third were told the person had been caught on camera cheating, and the remaining group were actually shown the fake video footage. All subjects were then asked to sign a statement only if they had seen the cheating take place. Nearly 40% of the participants who had seen the doctored video complied. A further 10% added their signatures when asked a second time. Of those who were told the incident had been caught on film but were not shown the video, only 10% agreed to sign, and about 5% of the control group who were just told about the cheating signed the statement.

Size does matter – just ask Ricky Ponting

Forget the Ashes; Aussie cricket skipper Ricky "Punter" Ponting really does have something to moan about. According to a new study based on the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (Hilda) survey of nearly 20,000 people, an Aussie male of Punter's height (1.78m or 5ft 10in) would be earning an extra $950 a year if he was 5cm (2in) taller. According to the report's co-author Professor Andrew Leigh, the reason for the discrepancy is because taller men are considered to be more intelligent and powerful than their shorter counterparts.

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