

Study finds tall people at top of wages ladder

17 May 2009

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 study in Australia. *(c) 2009 AFP*

The researchers found a strong link between wages and [height](#), particularly for men, with each additional 10 centimetres (four inches) of height adding three percent to hourly wages.

The "height premium" was two percent 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 (two inches) above the average height of 178 centimetres (5 feet 10 inches) 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 fat Australians were now in the majority, they did not face discrimination in the workplace.

APA citation: Study finds tall people at top of wages ladder (2009, May 17) retrieved 27 September 2020 from <https://phys.org/news/2009-05-tall-people-wages-ladder.html>

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