**Being short or fat can wreck your life chances: Small men and overweight women earn £1,500 LESS a year than taller, thinner people**

* **Researchers analysed genes, height and weight of 120,000 British people**
* **Shows for first time that body shape makes a strong impact on life chances**
* **Women a stone heavier and men three inches shorter earn on average £1,500 ($2,128) less a year than others with same CV**

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Smaller men get the short end of the stick throughout their lives, experts have found.

Male who are three inches shorter are likely to earn an average £1,500 ($2,128) less every year than taller men who have exactly the same qualifications, skills and education.

Scientists also found that fatter women are similarly disadvantaged, with an extra stone of body weight making a £1,500 dent on their annual salary.

The researchers, led by Exeter University and assisted by scientists at Harvard Medical School, analysed the genes, height and weight of 120,000 British people.

They used the data to prove for the first time that body shape makes a strong impact on life chances.

Experts have long known that shorter, heavier people are likely to be poorer.

But they had assumed this was because people who grow up in poverty are likely to be smaller and fatter, because of bad diets, living conditions and healthcare.

The Exeter team, however, set out to explore whether height and weight were influencing wealth, rather than the other way around.

By looking only at people whose genetic make-up was responsible for their body shape, they could be sure that viewed as a group, the participants were starting from a level playing field.

The team picked out 400 genetic variants that are associated with height, and 70 associated with body mass index.

Professor Tim Frayling, whose team's work is published in the British Medical Journal, said 'this is the best available evidence to indicate that your height or weight can directly influence your earnings and other socioeconomic factors throughout your life.

'If you could take the same woman, with the same intellect, same CV, same background, but send her through life a stone heavier, she would be about £1,500 ($2,128) a year worse off.

'And if you could take a 5'10' man – but make him 5'7' - and send him through life he would also be about £1,500 worse off per year.'

He added: 'Although we knew there was a strong association, most people assumed that shorter height and higher body mass index were a consequence of poorer nutrition and chances in life.

'Now we have shown that there is an effect in the other direction as well - shorter height and higher BMI can actually lead to lower income and other lifestyle measures.

'This won't apply in every case - many shorter men and overweight women are very successful - but science must now ask why we are seeing this pattern.

'Is this down to factors such as low self-esteem or depression, or is it more to do with discrimination? In a world where we are obsessed with body image, are employers biased? That would be bad both for the individuals involved and for society.'

Dr Jessica Tyrrell, lead author on the study, said 'the genetic analysis we used is the best possible method to test this link outside of randomly altering people's height and weight for a study, which is obviously impossible.

'Because we used genetics and 120,000 people, this is the strongest evidence to date that there's something about being shorter as a man and having a higher BMI as a woman that leads to being less well-off financially.'

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-3482375/Being-short-fat-wreck-life-chances-Small-men-overweight-women-earn-1-500-year-taller-thinner-people.html#ixzz49fSSNXqv>   
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