Short men and fat women 'get less chances in life' research says

SHORT men and fat women get less chances in life, according to British research.

PUBLISHED: 23:35, Tue, Mar 8, 2016

The study shows being a short man or overweight woman is associated with lower chances in life in areas including education and income.

The [results](http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/650785/Short-men-fat-women-less-chances-life) published in the British medical Journal, showed that shorter height, as estimated by genetics, leads to lower levels of education, lower job status, and less income, particularly in men.

They also revealed that higher BMI leads to lower income and greater deprivation in women.

Researchers say their findings provide the strongest evidence to date that overweight people, especially women, are at a socio-economic disadvantage - and that taller people, especially men, are at a socio-economic advantage.

 In developed countries, being taller and thinner are associated with higher socio-economic status, but the links are not fully understood.

A team of British and American researchers, led by Professor Timothy Frayling of the University of Exeter, set out to [test](http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/650785/Short-men-fat-women-less-chances-life) whether genetic variants influencing height or BMI play a direct role in socio-economic status.

They analysed genetic variants with known effects on height and body mass index (BMI) from 119,000 people aged between 40 and 70 in the UK Biobank - a database of biological information from half a million British adults.

GETTY

Five measures of socio-economic status were assessed: age completing full time education, degree level education, job class, annual household income, and Townsend deprivation index,a recognised social deprivation score.

The researchers said a range of factors could link taller stature to higher social position, although the study did not consider which of these factors were involved.

But they said possibilities include complex interactions between self esteem, stigma, positive discrimination, and increased intelligence.

Professor Frayling said: "These data support evidence that height and BMI [play](http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/650785/Short-men-fat-women-less-chances-life) an important partial role in determining several aspects of a person's socio-economic status, especially women's BMI for income and deprivation and men's height for education, income, and job class.

"These findings have [important](http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/650785/Short-men-fat-women-less-chances-life) social and health implications, supporting evidence that overweight people, especially women, are at a disadvantage and that taller people, especially men, are at an advantage."

Experts at the University of Bristol, in an accompanying editorial, said open data projects such as UK Biobank offer "great opportunities" for advancing understanding in the field.

But they point outed that "important caveats exist even to this interpretation" and called for "an appropriately careful approach to data analysis and interpretation."