

Voodoo doll and cannibalism studies triumph at Ig Nobels

<p>Notes &amp; Cues:</p>	<p>Article:</p> <p>Never mind the protests from health and safety. A research paper that describes how employees can overcome workplace injustice by torturing a voodoo doll that resembles their boss has landed one of the most coveted awards in academia: an Ig Nobel prize.</p> <p>The study, which sought to understand why disgruntled staff retaliate against bad superiors, found that tormenting a doll with pins and other implements helped restore their sense of fairness in the world.</p> <p>The Ig Nobel awards celebrate work that “first makes people laugh, and then makes them think”. Ten awards were announced on Thursday night at a ceremony at Harvard. They included a nutrition prize for work that revealed the unimpressive nutritional value of a cannibalistic diet. Lindie Liang and fellow psychologists at the University of Waterloo in Ontario won the economics prize for the voodoo doll investigation.</p> <p>In a series of experiments reported in the Leadership Quarterly, workers were asked to recall a time when their boss abused or bullied them, then half were given the chance to unleash their frustration on a virtual voodoo doll. “Those who stabbed the doll representing their boss felt a greater sense of fairness and justice, ” said Douglas Brown, a member of the team.</p> <p>Brown concedes that employees may want to find more positive ways to vent their anger after being offended by a bad boss, but he does not dismiss the value of virtual vengeance. “I personally don’t see any harm in torturing a voodoo doll, if it makes you feel better, ” he said. “We get to show people that science doesn’t necessarily need to be dry and boring. Sometimes you can do sound science and have a laugh along the way.”</p>
<p>Summary:</p>	