

5 April 2007

By: Stefan Anitei, Science Editor



[Solving the Napoleon Complex: Are Short Men More Aggressive Than Taller Ones?](#)

Noooo....

Naughty little devil...There is a common belief that men of below average height display more aggressiveness than their taller peers as they would try to convince the others that they are by no means less capable. The so-called "Napoleon complex" or "short man syndrome" makes 80 % of the population regard the small men as violent, but a new research reveals that in fact it is the tall men that are more likely to start an aggression in conflict situations. In fact, this common opinion makes many short men face discrimination and more obstacles in life, compared to their taller counterparts. Studies have already revealed that shorter men tend to gain less and are found less attractive to women (but the three times married Tom Cruise could infirm this). The research team from University of Central Lancashire put 10 men below 1.65m (5 ft) and 10 men of average height to be tested for their physical attributes, reaction times and eye-hand co-ordination. This is the world's first for short man syndrome. The subjects were involved in an aggression experiment called the chopstick game. There were formed mixed pairs that dueled across tables with wooden sticks, employed like swords, but one of the subjects had been asked to deliberately provoke the other by hitting him across the knuckles, rather than the sticks. Short men should have replied more aggressively if the Napoleon complex were true, but heart monitors attached to the subjects revealed that in fact the taller men acted more aggressively faced with the provocation. "The results were consistent with the view that small man syndrome is a myth. When people see a short man being aggressive, they are likely to think it is due to his size, simply because that attribute is obvious and grabs their attention." said lead researcher Dr Mike Eslea, the psychologist from the University. "But really it makes no more sense to say that, for example, Dennis Wise, (ex- footballer), is aggressive because he is small, than it would to say that Robbie Savage (also a footballer) is aggressive because he has blond hair". Some really "evil" short men were Napoleon Bonaparte (who gave its name to the complex) whose height is disputed between 1.58m (5ft 2in) to 1.68m (5ft 6in); Josef Stalin, the Soviet despot was 1.63m (5ft 4in)(according to 1902 police records) and Josef Goebbels, Hitler's Minister of Propaganda and Public Enlightenment in Nazi Germany (dubbed "the malicious dwarf") was 1.65m (5ft 5in). The reverse is represented by examples like Saddam Hussein, notorious for mass killings, inter-party "cleansings" and murderous whims, 1.88m (6ft 2in) tall; Idi Amin, 1.93 m (6ft4in) tall, former Ugandan dictator, responsible for genocides and many brutalities or Osama Bin Laden, the al Qaeda leader which is tall at 1.94m (6ft 4in) and thin, at just around 75kg (165lb) weight.