

Mythbusted -- people who wear glasses aren't geeks

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Latest Australian research into myopia or shortsightedness reveals that people who wear glasses are not stereotypical geeks or nerds.

“We have literally busted the myth that people who wear glasses are introverted or have particular personality characteristics. They are more likely to be agreeable and open, rather than closed and introverted,” said A/Prof Paul Baird of the University of Melbourne’s Centre for Eye Research Australia.

Myopia or shortsightedness is a complex eye condition which affects about one in four Australians.

In the world’s biggest study into factors linked to myopia, and utilising the University’s Australian Twin Registry, 633 twins and a comparative group of 278 family members were involved in the study over a four year period.

For the first time in a study into personality and myopia, participants were analysed using a state-of-the-art measure of the five major personality factors (Openness, Conscientiousness, Extroversion, Agreeableness and Neuroticism), administered by psychologists from the University of Melbourne.

Results revealed that comparison of family members and twins showed no link between myopia and introversion; however there was a significant but small association with myopia and Agreeableness.

“Working together we have been able to generate more comprehensive and consistent results than previously obtained regarding personality and myopia,” said Nick Haslam from the School of Behavioural Science at the University of Melbourne

The results have important social and preventative implications.

“Good eye care is really important but unfortunately there are not always good associations with wearing glasses,” says Baird.

“This shows that people, particularly children, should not avoid or delay wearing glasses due to preconceived ideas about what it would imply about their personalities.”

The personality focus provides a key element in a series of studies to identify factors involved in myopia. The other elements investigated were environmental and genetic factors.

Shortsighted people have difficulty seeing distant objects, making it difficult to engage in everyday activities such as driving and watching television.

Source: University of Melbourne

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