Science & Technology

Study Hall: Winter 2016

Research briefs

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Razzle-dazzle ’em

Smarts, strategy, and performance are important, but they alone won’t get you the top job. A study of 2,600 executives coauthored by Morten Sørensen, an adjunct associate professor at Columbia Business School, found that job candidates who also rate high on charisma are most likely to be hired as CEOs.

Pot payoff

In states that have legalized medical marijuana, fewer people appear to be using opioids, according to a new study by researchers at Columbia’s Mailman School of Public Health.

Big dustup

A team of geologists that includes Columbia’s Dennis Kent, an adjunct senior research scientist at Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, has found evidence that an ancient period of global warming was caused by a comet that struck the earth fifty-five million years ago, forcing enormous amounts of carbon into the atmosphere.

Blue note

Pregnant women who take selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, or SSRIs, the most common form of antidepressant, increase their children’s risk of speech and language disorders from about 1 percent to 1.37 percent. The study of 65,000

mothers in Finland, which was led by Columbia psychiatrist and epidemiologist Alan Brown, adds to a growing body of research that indicates SSRIs are potentially harmful to fetuses.

Mind over money

Companies that take their social responsibility seriously can save on salaries. A study by Vanessa Burbano, an assistant professor of management at Columbia Business School, found that people applying for jobs in the for-profit sector submitted wage bids that were 44 percent lower, on average, if they were informed of a company's ethical business practices.

Enthusiasm gap

Male geoscientists are less likely to give female students enthusiastic recommendations for postdoctoral fellowships, according to a new study of letters written by 1,224 faculty at five hundred institutions worldwide. The male scientists tend to describe women as "hard-working" and "diligent," while reserving such accolades as "brilliant" and "superb" for men, says lead author Kuheli Dutt, an assistant director of academic affairs and diversity at Columbia's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory.

Toss the toupee

Columbia University Medical Center researchers have discovered that a drug used to treat bone cancers and arthritis promotes hair growth in people with alopecia areata, a condition that causes hair loss. Of the small sample size studied, 75 percent of patients experienced hair regrowth after six to nine months of treatment. The scientists plan to test the same drug on male pattern baldness.



Guide to school abbreviations