

# Facing up to truth about brain power

By **Judith Duffy**

MEN with regular features are likely to remain more mentally alert in later life, according to a new study.

Researchers at the University of Edinburgh found that men with higher levels of facial symmetry were less likely to suffer a slow down of brain power between the ages of 79 and 83.

They believe the findings show having matching features is linked to how the body and mind will age.

This is because it could be a reflection of stability in men, indicating fewer stresses and strains on the body such as diseases, toxins and malnutrition.

Among the famous names said to have a perfectly proportioned face is Hollywood actor Tom Cruise.

Study leader Dr Lars Penke, of the University of Edinburgh's School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences, said that previous research had suggested mental decline is an aspect of body-wide ageing. He said: "This link could show that facial symmetry can be used as a marker which could predict this decline. We are now planning to look at body-wide symmetry, as well as indicators of facial skin ageing, in relationship to intelligence and old-age cognitive decline."

Surprisingly, the same link to memory loss was not found in women.

The study, published in the journal *Evolution and Human Behaviour*, is the first to explore the link between facial symmetry and cognitive ability.



**Tom Cruise has regular features**