

RICH DUTCH WORDS

HUGO BRANDT CORSTIUS

Amsterdam The Netherlands

For each letter the number of times that letter may occur in one Dutch word is given, plus the shortest word with that number of repetitions:

baccalaureaatsgraat (7)	binnenantennen (7)
hobbeldebobbel (5)	oostnoordoost (6)
catch-as-catch-can (5)	papperlapappen (6)
donderdagmiddag (6)	quinquet (2)
levensverzekeringsgeneeskundetje (10)	harrewarrerij (5)
afvalstoffenheffing (5)	stoffwisselingsstoornissen (7)
overbruggingsregeling (5)	tetterettetten (7)
huichelachtigheid (4)	uterusruptuur (5)
liquiditeitscrisis (6)	vijvervis (3)
jojootje (3)	wiewauw (3)
koekoeksklokken (6)	Xerox (2)
allylalcoholletje (6)	polyhydroxyaldehyde (4)
mammogrammen (5)	jazzmuziek

We find a beautiful law when we divide the number of words containing n e's by the number of words containing $n+1$ e's. After a poor start, all quotients are rounded to 1,2,3...--i.e., the number of words containing n e's is n times the number of words contain $n+1$ e's.:

649545 words with 1 e, 440243 words with 2 e's, 210809 words with 3 e's,
70566 words with 4 e's, 17020 words with 5 e's, 3240 words with 6 e's,
531 words with 7 e's, 75 words with 8 e's, 9 words with 9 e's, 1 word with 10 e's

and the corresponding quotients are 1.475, 2.088, 2.987, 4.146, 5.253, 6.102, 7.08, 8.333 and 9.

Pages 74-5 of Making the Alphabet Dance gives words having the most repeated letters from the unabridged Merriam-Webster dictionary. Dutch beats English by 3 letters for E (ethylenediaminetetraacetate), but English turns around to beat Dutch by 4 letters for U (humuhumunukunukuapuaa)! For a listing of more outré words having repeated letters, the reader is referred to "Alphabetic Clusters" in the May 1997 Word Ways, which in toto uses repeated letters 40 more times than Merriam-Webster does.