

## Exposure to Media Images of Female Attractiveness and Concern with Body Weight Among Young Women<sup>1</sup>

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*Despite the popular belief that the thin standard of female attractiveness currently presented in the media is a primary contributor to the high level of concern with body weight among women, experimental studies have not shown that exposure to media images increases women's weight concern. Three experiments are reported demonstrating that exposure to media images does often result in increased weight concern among women, but that body dissatisfaction, a stable personality characteristic, is a moderator of vulnerability to this effect. Although most women reported higher weight concern when exposed to media vs. neutral images, women with low initial body dissatisfaction did not. In addition, this research suggests that negative effects on weight concern may result from even passive exposure to media images, but that exposure to realistic attractiveness is less likely to cause increased weight concern. The ethnicity of the participants in these studies reflected that of the local population, with over 90% white. The nonwhite participants primarily belonged to one of the following groups; Asian, Pacific Islander, Latino.*

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The ideal image of feminine attractiveness currently presented in the media is rigid, with a particular emphasis on thinness (Cash & Henry, 1995; Freedman, 1984). Many authors have suggested that media images of attractiveness may be responsible for the normative discontent among young women regarding their own body weight (Evans, Gilpin, Farkas, Shenassa, & Pierce, 1995; Jacobi & Cash, 1994; Polivy & Herman, 1985; Silverstein, Perdue, Peterson, & Kelly, 1986; Stein & Reichert, 1990; Stice, Schupak-Neuberg, Shaw, & Stein, 1994; Striegel-Moore, Silberstein, & Rodin, 1986; Wolf, 1991; Wooley & Wooley, 1984). If females perceive a discrepancy between the accepted standard of female attractiveness and their own bodies, they may become concerned that their own weight is not acceptable. Given that most researchers and practitioners generally accept these ideas, it is somewhat surprising that experimental investigations have not found a link between exposure to the media ideal and increased concern with weight (e.g., Irving, 1990).

It seems intuitively plausible that a majority of young women may find media images of female attractiveness threatening. Because current media images of ideal female beauty are narrowly defined, exaggerated, and emphasize thinness, exposure to media images may make salient the discrepancy between a female perceiver's conception of her own weight and the standard accepted by society. Females' social outcomes depend critically on their attractiveness (e.g., Buss, 1994; Feingold, 1990), and accordingly a perceived discrepancy is likely to be quite threatening, perhaps leading to increased concern with body weight.

We suggest here, however, that not all young women are equally affected by media exposure. Specifically, the minority of women who are consistently satisfied with their own body shape may not find exposure to media images threatening. We suggest that women may experience stable satisfaction with their bodies if (a) their body shape is not markedly different than models pictured in media images (a rarity), or (b) body weight is not an important determinant of their self-worth because they are confident in skills and abilities unrelated to physical attractiveness. Women in the former category are unlikely to perceive a discrepancy between their bodies and the media ideal. In the latter case, a perceived discrepancy may be affectively inconsequential because confidence in other arenas renders physical attractiveness unimportant. In either case, we would not expect that women satisfied with their bodies would exhibit adverse effects resulting from media exposure.

An experiment reported by Heinberg and Thompson (1995) provides support for these notions. These researchers explored the moderating effects of awareness and acceptance of societal attitudes toward female attractiveness, and level of cognitive distortions related to physical

appearance, on college women's reactions to viewing television commercials depicting the media ideal of attractiveness. Heinberg and Thompson found that women high (vs. low) in cognitive distortions, and high (vs. low) in awareness of societal attitudes, were more depressed, angry, and more dissatisfied with their bodies following viewing the commercials.

The distinction between women with high vs. low trait body satisfaction may help account for previous failures to find effects of exposure to media images on weight concern. Experiments that expose women to either media images or control images without taking account of initial body satisfaction may fail to find effects of exposure because women satisfied with their bodies, albeit a minority of the sample, may obscure the effects of the manipulation.

### **The Present Research**

Three experiments were conducted to investigate how exposure to media images of female attractiveness may affect women's concern with their weight. In each experiment we sought to distinguish between women likely vs. unlikely to be affected by exposure to media images prior to the experimental manipulation. This was accomplished with the use of the Body Dissatisfaction subscale of the Eating Disorder Inventory (Garner, 1991; see below for a more complete description of the scale). The Body Dissatisfaction subscale assesses dissatisfaction with the shape and size of the body. Research suggests that Body Dissatisfaction is a stable, enduring trait (Wear & Pratz, 1987).

Consistent with literature regarding the influence of traits on perception (see Markus, 1977), we hypothesized that trait body dissatisfaction would moderate the impact of media exposure on women's weight concern. Specifically, females high in body dissatisfaction were expected to report more weight concern following media exposure than females with similar body dissatisfaction exposed to neutral images. This was hypothesized because exposure to media images may make salient the discrepancy between perceivers' body shapes and that of the media ideal. In contrast, females low in body dissatisfaction were not expected to report different weight concern as a function of condition because media images would not be threatening to these women.

### **EXPERIMENT 1**

In the first experiment female undergraduates completed a measure of trait body dissatisfaction prior to being exposed to slides of either fashion

models taken from popular women's magazines or neutral images. Weight concern was measured following exposure to the slides.

## Participants

One hundred thirty-six female University of Utah undergraduates ages 18–25 enrolled in introductory psychology participated in the research to receive extra course credit. The ethnic composition of the sample (and samples in subsequent experiments) reflected that of the local population, with over 90% white. The nonwhite participants primarily belonged to one of the following groups; Asian, Pacific Islander, Latino. Women participated in groups of 2–5, and groups were randomly assigned to an experimental condition.

## Materials

*EDI-2.* The Eating Disorder Inventory (second edition) is a self-report measure of symptoms generally related to eating disorders (Garner, 1991). The EDI-2 contains eleven standardized subscales. Each subscale is independently derived and represents a unique trait. In the present study the EDI-2 was used to assess participants' body dissatisfaction. The Body Dissatisfaction subscale assesses overall dissatisfaction with the size and shape of particular body regions by asking respondents to state how often each of nine statements is true about them (e.g., "I feel satisfied with the shape of my body"; "I think my hips are too big"). The scale ranges from 0 to 27, with 0 indicating the absence of body dissatisfaction and 27 extreme dissatisfaction. The Body Dissatisfaction subscale has demonstrated satisfactory reliability and validity, and possesses satisfactory internal consistency ( $\alpha = .92$ ) (see Garner, 1991, and unpublished studies referenced within).

*Slides.* Stimuli consisted of a series of slides of fashion models and automobiles. Ten slides of each type were assembled. Slides of professional fashion models created from pictures selected from popular women's magazines (e.g., *Glamour*, *Vogue*, *Cosmopolitan*) comprised the stimuli for the media ideal condition. The basis for selection was that pictures clearly depicted the current media standard of female attractiveness. The slides did not contain any images besides the models. Slides of automobiles were used in a control condition. No people appeared in the slides of the automobiles.

*Body Esteem Scale.* The Weight Concern subscale of the Body Esteem Scale (Franzoi & Shields, 1984) was used to measure participants' postma-

nipulation concern with their weight. The subscale contains 10 items that are summed. Items ask respondents to indicate the valence and strength of their feelings toward, for example, their weight, figure, and body build. Scores on the Weight Concern subscale range from 10 to 50, with lower scores signifying more concern with weight. For the purposes of this study the Body Esteem Scale was adapted as a state rather than trait measure. This was accomplished by asking participants to focus on current affect when they responded to the scale items (see Franzoi & Shields, 1984). The Body Esteem Scale contains two additional subscales, Physical Condition and Sexual Attractiveness, that were not of interest in the present research. The Body Esteem Scale has exhibited satisfactory reliability, validity, and internal consistency ( $\alpha = .87$ ; Franzoi & Herzog, 1986; Franzoi & Shields, 1984; Thomas & Freeman, 1990).

### *Procedure*

Upon arrival to an experiment described as "Consumer Preferences," participants were told by a female experimenter that they would be participating in an investigation of the effects of lifestyle, personality, and self-image on preferences for consumer products such as clothing and automobiles. After receiving the description of the study and instructions, participants reported their age and were given the EDI-2, ostensibly a multifaceted personality measure. Although we were only interested in participants' Body Dissatisfaction scores, all of the EDI-2 items were administered to reduce the likelihood that responding to body-related questions would make participants self-conscious about body image, and bias subsequent processing of the stimuli. The Body Dissatisfaction items were embedded in the standardized EDI-2 response sheets among items measuring, for example Perfectionism (e.g., "Only outstanding performance is good enough in my family"), Ineffectiveness (e.g., "I feel alone in the world"), and Interoceptive Awareness (e.g., "I have feelings I can't quite identify").

When participants completed the EDI-2 they were told that the next part of the experiment involved indicating consumer preferences for images contained in a series of slides. In the media ideal condition participants viewed slides of fashion models. To support the cover story, and to increase processing of the images contained in the slides, participants were given a "Fashion Preference Questionnaire." This questionnaire consisted of five statements about each slide (e.g., "This is something I would wear in public"; "This outfit would be flattering to my figure"). Participants were given ten seconds to view each slide, followed by twenty seconds to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with each statement. Participants in

the control condition completed the same procedure, except they viewed slides of automobiles and received a "Car Preference Questionnaire," which asked questions about the automobiles (e.g., "This car suits my personal style").

After viewing the slides participants completed the Body Esteem Scale, which was used to measure weight concern. After the participants had finished the Body Esteem Scale, they were debriefed and excused.

## Results and Discussion

Because the majority of women are dissatisfied with their bodies (Evans et al., 1995; Jacobi & Cash, 1994; Stein & Reichert, 1990; Wooley & Wooley, 1984), we decided that distinguishing the majority of women who were initially dissatisfied with their bodies from the minority who were satisfied would best be accomplished by dividing the sample according to an extreme cutoff. In this initial investigation, we made a post hoc decision regarding the specific body dissatisfaction scores that would define satisfied vs. dissatisfied women after inspection of the data. It appeared that women scoring 5 and below responded differently from women scoring above 5. Accordingly, for the purposes of this study participants scoring between 0 and 5 were classified as "satisfied," and participants scoring 6 through 27 were classified "dissatisfied."<sup>3</sup>

Consistent with previous research (e.g., Irving, 1990) a  $2 \times 2$  (Condition  $\times$  Body Dissatisfaction) ANOVA of weight concern scores failed to reveal a significant main effect for condition,  $F(1,132) = 1.33$ ,  $p = .25$  (see Table I). Consistent with present expectations, however, the ANOVA revealed a significant interaction between condition and body dissatisfaction,  $F(1,132) = 5.02$ ,  $p = .03$ . A series of contrasts was carried out to determine the nature of the interaction (see McCall, 1994; Pagano, 1994). Means were lower (indicating more weight concern) for dissatisfied women in the media ideal condition than for dissatisfied women in the control

<sup>3</sup>Some readers may wonder why we do not report a regression of weight concern onto condition, body dissatisfaction score, and an interaction term. Because one of our main goals in this research was to establish an appropriate cutoff score on the Body Dissatisfaction subscale for use by other researchers interested in the impact of media exposure on females, we report the data split based on the extreme cutoff score throughout the paper. Although the reported analyses are quite conservative (i.e., loss of power due to dichotomizing a continuous variable, comparative inefficiency of analysis of variance (ANOVA) when cell sizes are markedly different), we obtain consistent results with the extreme cutoff split in each of the three experiments. It should be noted that we did conduct regression analyses to explore the possibility that body dissatisfaction moderated weight concern scores in a nonlinear fashion. There was no evidence for nonlinear moderational effects.

**Table I.** Mean Weight Concern as a Function of Body Dissatisfaction and Condition<sup>a</sup>

Condition	Body Dissatisfaction	
	Dissatisfied	Satisfied
Experiment 1		
Media ideal	20.1 (s = 7.6, n = 41)	39.3 (s = 5.4, n = 30)
Control	24.3 (s = 8.0, n = 41)	38.0 (s = 6.0, n = 24)
Experiment 2		
Media ideal	21.8 (s = 7.2, n = 43)	39.1 (s = 6.1, n = 15)
Realistic image	25.4 (s = 5.9, n = 47)	37.1 (s = 7.6, n = 15)
Control	25.6 (s = 7.3, n = 42)	35.8 (s = 6.5, n = 19)
Experiment 3		
Media ideal	24.0 (s = 5.3, n = 20)	37.1 (s = 5.0, n = 10)
Control	27.8 (s = 6.4, n = 20)	31.0 (s = 4.4, n = 3)

<sup>a</sup>Lower values indicate more weight concern. S stands for standard deviation.

condition,  $F_{\text{comp}}(1,132) = 7.33, p = .008$ . There was not a significant difference between satisfied women as a function of condition,  $F_{\text{comp}}(1,132) < 1$ . As expected, the ANOVA revealed a significant main effect for body dissatisfaction,  $F(1,132) = 180.77, p = < .001$ , as women initially dissatisfied with their bodies tended to report more weight concern.

The results demonstrate that exposure to media images of attractiveness has the potential to increase some young women's concern with their weight. Not all women, though, were susceptible to this effect. Participants who came into the experiment with low trait body dissatisfaction did not appear to be affected by the experimental manipulation. We suggest that this is the case because women who are generally satisfied with their bodies are not likely to be threatened when exposed to media images.

## EXPERIMENT 2

Because we were concerned that the data split based on the extreme cutoff score employed in the analyses of Experiment 1 may have capitalized on chance, we conducted a replication. An additional purpose of Experiment 2 was to compare the potential of exposure to images of realistic feminine attractiveness to produce increased weight concern with that of media images.

Exposure to images of fashion models may be particularly likely to increase perceivers' concern with weight because the media ideal is so extreme, and accordingly likely to be discrepant with perceivers' own physical characteristics (but see Cash, Cash, & Butters, 1983, for a different view), but what about attractive women one might meet in everyday life? In ac-

cordance with notions of discrepancy discussed above, we expected that only the highly stylized, artificially perfected image of beauty presented by the media (see Brown, Childers, & Waszak, 1990) would be likely to cause increased concern with weight. Perceivers may be less likely to feel that their bodies are discrepant with images of attractive women who are not models because attractive women one might see in everyday life are almost always heavier than models (Cash & Henry, 1995), and the attractiveness of such women is not accentuated by artificial means (such as photographic retouching, use of tape to shape body areas, etc.).

To test these notions we replicated the media ideal and control conditions of Experiment 1, and added a third condition in which participants were exposed to images of attractive women who were not fashion models.

## Method

### *Participants*

One hundred and eighty-one female undergraduates ages 18–25 enrolled in introductory psychology at the University of Utah were recruited to participate in the experiment in exchange for extra course credit. Groups of 2–5 females were randomly assigned to conditions.

### *Procedure*

Participants arriving for the “Consumer Preferences” study were given the same instructions, and followed the same procedure, as in Experiment 1. As in Experiment 1, the experimenter was female. The only difference was the addition of the “realistic image” condition, in which participants viewed slides of attractive college women prior to responding to the weight concern measure. The set of slides shown to participants in the realistic image condition was assembled from a pool of slides of women attending colleges and universities in southern California, Illinois, and Michigan. Women in these slides wore tight-fitting clothing similar to that shown in fashion magazines. Ten slides were selected from this pool on the basis of a pilot test that identified the most attractive women. The average attractiveness rating of these slides was 4.5 on a scale of 1 (*extremely unattractive*) to 7 (*extremely attractive*).

## Results and Discussion

Women were again classified as either initially satisfied or dissatisfied with their bodies on the basis of their Body Dissatisfaction scores in a manner identical to Experiment 1. Consistent with Experiment 1, a  $3 \times 2$  (Condition  $\times$  Body Dissatisfaction) ANOVA of weight concern scores failed to reveal a significant main effect for condition,  $F(2,175) < 1$ , but did reveal a significant interaction between condition and body dissatisfaction,  $F(2,175) = 3.51, p = .03$  (see Table I). A series of contrasts was carried out to determine the nature of the interaction. Dissatisfied women in the media ideal condition reported more weight concern than dissatisfied women in both the control,  $F_{\text{comp}}(1,175) = 6.70, p = .01$ , and realistic image conditions,  $F_{\text{comp}}(1,175) = 6.71, p = .01$ . Weight concern means were not different for participants exposed to college women versus control slides,  $F_{\text{comp}}(1,175) < 1$ . A simple main effects analysis of weight concern among satisfied participants across condition was not significant,  $F(2,46) < 1$ . As expected, the ANOVA revealed a significant main effect for body dissatisfaction,  $F(2,175) = 132.15, p = < .001$ , as women initially dissatisfied with their bodies tended to report more weight concern.

In conjunction with Experiment 1, the results of Experiment 2 demonstrate that dividing women on the basis of their level of body dissatisfaction into satisfied and dissatisfied groups reliably distinguishes women who are susceptible vs. not susceptible to adverse effects of media exposure. The experiment also suggests that images of realistic beauty are not as likely to induce women to become concerned with their weight as are images of the perfected media standard, ostensibly because the attractiveness of the women pictured in the realistic attractiveness slides was not as extremely discrepant with the attractiveness of our participants. To the extent that the realistic images were less likely than the media ideal images to produce a perceived discrepancy between the viewer and the images, exaggerated weight concern was unlikely.

One potential concern with the methodology of the first two experiments involves the explicit social comparison prompts contained in the Fashion Preference Questionnaire. Many media outlets frequented by women do contain explicit prompts that attempt to lead the viewer to compare herself with the thin ideal. Popular women's magazines, for example, often pair models with a caption encouraging weight loss. In many contexts where females are exposed to the thin ideal, though, no such prompts are present. For example, there is nothing intrinsic to watching an attractive actress perform in a television show that would prompt viewers to compare themselves with the actress. Perhaps the explicit prompts in Experiments 1 and 2 primed dysfunctional processing of the slides and increased the

negative effects of media exposure. To explore the generality of the findings of the first two experiments, a third experiment was conducted that did not include explicit comparison prompts, and accordingly may be more ecologically valid.

### EXPERIMENT 3

Participants were again recruited for an experiment ostensibly investigating “Consumer Preferences.” Participants were exposed to either slides of fashion models or automobiles; there was no realistic image condition. The procedure was similar to the first two experiments with the exceptions that an additional distractor questionnaire was administered, the Fashion Preference Questionnaire was replaced by a checklist that did not prompt social comparison, and participants were probed for suspicion following the experiment.

#### Method

##### *Participants*

Fifty-three female undergraduates ages 18–25 enrolled in introductory psychology at the University of Utah were recruited to participate in the experiment in exchange for extra course credit. The ethnic composition of the sample was similar to that of the samples of the first two experiments. Groups of 2–5 women were randomly assigned to conditions.

##### *Procedure*

The procedure followed Experiments 1 and 2 with three exceptions. Following the administration of the EDI-2 participants were asked to complete a “Consumer Preferences Questionnaire,” which asked a series of questions such as, “Do you shop more at department stores than discounted retail stores?” The purpose of this questionnaire was to provide additional distraction from the true purpose of the study, and to interfere with any body image priming induced by the administration of the EDI-2. The Fashion Preference Questionnaire administered during slide viewing in the first experiment was replaced by a simple checklist that asked participants to indicate whether or not they liked the style of the clothing in each slide, and whether or not they would buy the clothing if they saw it in a store.

These questions were used because they supported the cover story without directly prompting participants to compare their physical attributes with those of the models. The final procedural difference between Experiment 3 and the earlier experiments was a suspicion check administered following the completion of the study. Participants were asked in a free response format to indicate their understanding of the true purpose of the experiment.

## Results and Discussion

Responses to the suspicion measure indicated that demand characteristics were not operating in this experiment. None of the participants in the media ideal condition expressed the belief that viewing the slides was supposed to influence subsequent responses to the Body Esteem Scale. In fact, responses suggest that the cover story was successful with 63% of media ideal and 64% of control participants spontaneously reporting that they believed that the purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between dimensions of personality and consumer preferences.

Participants were again classified into satisfied (0–5) and dissatisfied groups (6–27) on the basis of their Body Dissatisfaction scores. Similarly to the first two experiments, a 2 x 2 (Condition x Body Dissatisfaction) ANOVA of Weight Concern scores revealed a nonsignificant main effect for condition,  $F(1,49) < 1$ , but a significant main effect for body dissatisfaction,  $F(1,49) = 15.76, p < .001$ . In accordance with predictions, a significant interaction between condition and body dissatisfaction was obtained,  $F(1,49) = 5.72, p = .02$  (see Table I). Contrasts among women initially dissatisfied with their bodies revealed more weight concern in the media ideal than the control condition,  $F_{\text{comp}}(1,49) = 4.54, p = .04$ , but not among initially satisfied women,  $F_{\text{comp}}(1,49) = 2.70, p > .1$ .

The results demonstrate that participants responded very similarly in all three experiments. Even without special instructions that directly prompted comparison with the fashion models, females initially dissatisfied with their bodies, unlike initially satisfied females, expressed more concern with their weight than did control participants.

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

Together, the results from the three experiments clearly demonstrate that exposure to media images of female attractiveness is capable of causing increased weight concern among most young women. This effect appears

to be quite robust as increased weight concern resulted both from exposure to media images paired with direct comparison prompts (Experiments 1 and 2), and from passive exposure to media images (Experiment 3). The social context of Experiments 1 and 2 is akin to reading popular women's magazines, which often pair explicit suggestions for weight loss with images of slim models. Although explicit prompts may heighten potentially damaging effects of media exposure, women may still experience increased concern with weight when comparison prompts are absent (e.g., watching television, shopping from a catalog).

We suggest that the effect of media exposure on females' weight concern results from a social comparison process whereby female perceivers assess their appearance relative to society's standard as depicted in the media (Heinberg & Thompson, 1992a, b; Wood, 1989; but see Cash *et al.*, 1983). Because the media's perfected image of slim feminine attractiveness is so exaggerated, most of our participants were doomed to perceive a discrepancy between their bodies and that of the media standard when they compared their bodies with those of the fashion models. This subjective inferiority may be particularly aversive because physical appearance is an important determinant of females' social outcomes. When the experimental manipulation made this discrepancy evident, many of our participants responded with increased concern with their weight.

Not all women, though, were susceptible to the manipulation. Women who were initially very satisfied with their bodies did not report more concern with weight following exposure to media images. Initially satisfied participants may have been immune to the manipulation for two reasons. First, a woman may have low body dissatisfaction because her body shape is similar to that of the standard depicted in the media. Accordingly, such a participant would not have been likely to perceive a discrepancy between her own body and that of the models. A second possibility is that even if a woman is substantially heavier than the media standard, she may possess low body dissatisfaction because body image issues are not important to her, because, for example, she is confident in her skills and abilities in other arenas. A female with low body dissatisfaction for either reason would not likely be threatened by exposure to media images, and increased weight concern would be unlikely.

The present results strongly suggest the utility of considering trait body dissatisfaction in experiments which purport to investigate the effects of media exposure on women. Because only a subset of women are likely to be affected by media exposure, media influences may not be detected by main effects analyses (e.g., comparing weight concern across an experimental and control condition).

The present findings are particularly disturbing in light of the relative weakness of the experimental manipulation compared to real life experience. In our studies most participants who viewed ten images of fashion models for a brief interval reported increased weight concern. Since this manipulation was sufficient to produce an adverse effect on weight concern, it stands to reason that a lifetime of exposure to media images may produce much more severe consequences. Supporting this speculation, a recent study by Stice et al. (1994) found that the amount of exposure females had to the media was predictive of eating disorder symptomology.

In addition to delineating which women are vulnerable to harmful effects of media exposure, the present research also is informative about which images are likely to cause women to become increasingly concerned with their weight. Experiment 2 provides preliminary evidence that exposure to extreme media beauty, but not realistic beauty, is capable of causing adverse effects. This finding is not surprising—more attractive images would be expected to be more threatening to perceivers. To the extent that images depict extreme attractiveness, females are likely to perceive a discrepancy between self and the ideal.

Our studies, however, do not identify the specific reason why slides of attractive college women did not make participants concerned with their own weight. There are two differences between the media slides and the slides of the attractive college women that may account for women not reporting increased concern with weight after viewing the slides of college women. First, fashion models are much thinner than almost all of the attractive women one might meet in real life. Second, fashion images are highly stylized creations, which rely on photographic retouching, lighting effects, taping down any hint of models' excess flesh, and so forth (Lakoff & Scherr, 1984). It is likely that the extreme thinness of the models combined with professional photographic techniques and retouching interact to produce a "superimage" with which most women simply cannot compete.

An interesting question for future research is to understand the cognitive processes of women who do not experience increased weight concern following exposure to media images. Such an investigation may provide beneficial information for use in clinical interventions with clients with body image disturbance. By studying the psychological components of a body-satisfied person, or the cognitive responses such a person has when exposed to images of media attractiveness, interventions may be developed to buffer vulnerable women from the effects of media exposure.

In addition, it would be interesting to assess the utility of a psychoeducational approach in reducing the likelihood or severity of females' negative responses to media exposure. Perhaps providing females with information on the effects of cosmetics, lighting, and photographic retouching in pro-

ducing media images would lead females to perceive models as inappropriate targets for social comparison. In this way, the media's contribution to young women's feelings of inadequacy with respect to their own bodies may be attenuated.

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