

Research paper on facts: body image with girls ages 9-13 years of age

[Media](#), [Television](#)



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Body Dysmorphia

ABSTRACT

Body image continues to be one of the most prevalent psychological issues among young women in the United States today. However, it seems that the literature, as proposed to the general public, states it as just that: young, American women. This paper will discuss a more in depth description as to the understood sociocultural effects on young women, as that seems to be most understood, as well as women of later age and, in addition, men of all ages. This paper will also discuss how men have been left in the dark in regards to this issue and will expand upon the understanding of the topic of body dysmorphia (image) as a whole.

Body Dysmorphia

Since World War II, the media has placed its own stigma as to what body image should and shouldn't be; today there is a significant amount of emphasis being placed on young women of all ages regardless of sociocultural status. At one time the older a woman got the less the media would focus on her body image she would soon dissipate from the focus of the media, however today there is almost as much emphasis placed on older

women in the media as younger women. Arbitrary to one's belief men are "catching" a lot of criticism these days with regards to their body image as well.

People tend to think body image is only a psychological issue with young women quite the contrary, body image exist regardless of age, color, or cultural background, yes, younger women may suffer from the psychological aspect more so than any other age group, but the problem is the issue still exists. The National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders recently reported (2013): " 8, 000, 000 or more people in the United States have an eating disorder, of those 8, 000, 000 ninety percent are women, the report went on to say Eating Disorders normally begin during the teenage years but have been known to begin as early as eight years of age." (National Association of Anorexia Nervosa & Associated Disorders, 2013).

Self-perceptions are essential to study because they can have effects for an individual's mental and physical wellbeing. Historical studies have revealed that culture plays an important role in creating appearance standards and that these differ for women and men of diverse cultures.

In a recent study the resemblances and variances amongst cultures in relations to negative body image in women were deliberated shadowed by an investigation of the part of acculturation in the growth of negative body image. (Altabe, M., 1998). The discoveries exhibited that a substantial percentage of women of diverse societies are displeased with their figures and several are dieting to lose weight. The resemblances between the groups specified that the result of non-Western cultures that formerly

encouraged larger, more accurate body principles is now fading. Thinner body standards are now being reiterated for all women and men irrespective of culture and ethnicity, thus growing the defenselessness to emerging an undesirable body image. (Ball, K., & Kenardy, J., 2002).

It appears the media, newspaper, television, commercials, radio, the internet, sales ads and promotions are promoting, “ the thinner you are the better you are,” is what it appears that is being said to the public today, regardless of age or gender. There was a time young girls could watch the Disney channel and enjoy television. However times has definitely changed, young girls as early as age 8 has begun watching the Disney channel and then after watching a show, will try dieting to make their body look like Hannah Montana or whatever character is most popular at the time.

There is such a strong emphasis placed on the television stars themselves about their body image and the need to stay thin, regardless of whether it's American television shows, UK shows or Canadian television shows, to the media “ thin is thin.” The publicist of some of the television stars has even shared publicly in interviews the pressure that is placed on one that is in the public eye; the need to continue to remain in the public eye is to maintain a certain body image. This is psychologically insane for the individual to maintain employment as well as maintain a certain body image. Women are now being forced (and certainly anticipated) to be tinny and slim, which is connected to characteristics such as sexual desirability, fitness, accomplishment and self-discipline (Wykes & Gunter, 2005; Cheney, 2010).

There is no wonder the continuous increasing rate of public figures needing to undergo mental health treatment also so many of the public figures who

has turned to drugs and alcohol after not being able to handle the pressure from the media to maintain a certain body image.

- In a review of girls nine and ten years old, forty percent have at one time attempted to lose weight, according to a continuing study financed by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute.
- “ A research on 5th graders, ten year old girls and boys told examiners they were unhappy with their individual body images after viewing a music video by Britney Spears or a clip from the television series " Friends".” (Gentile, Douglas, 2002).
- A 1996 research found that the period an adolescent watches soap operas, shows and music videos is related with their grade of body unhappiness and aspiration to be skinny. (Gentile, Douglas, 2002).
- One research shows that at age 13, fifty three percent of American girls are " unhappy with their bodies." This will increase to seventy eight percent by the time girls reach 17. (Gentile, Douglas, 2002).

In regards to the first fact stated above, 5th graders watch a Britney Spears video or the television series Friends would ordinarily be two shows or videos parents would approve of their children watching. However, with the emphasis being placed to the extreme on body image, young 5th graders who are overweight, obese or known as chubby will develop immediately low self-esteem issues, which is where the psychological issues begin.

Psychological issues pertaining to body image according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, fourth edition, text revision (DSM IV-TR) could result in a variety of diagnoses, including but not limited to;

Eating Disorders which are classified in two categories or a mixture of both - Anorexia and Bulimia, Body Dysmorphic Disorder, Depression, Anxiety Disorder, the list is endless when it comes to body image and how far a person has been pressured to maintain or obtain a certain body type. (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Eating Disorders are not easily treated with a few therapy sessions, according to over 100 therapists nationwide; the average patient who has been diagnosed with an Eating Disorder will receive therapy for two years or longer.

Both anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa are more frequently found in adolescent females and women. “ Estimates of female-to-male ratio range from 6 : 1 to 10 : 1.” (American Psychiatric Association, 2000).

Television commercials are filled with thousands of dollars in ads advertising women, men, young women and young men who is displayed as what the media considers the “ perfect” body, which is skinny to point of looking malnourished no loose skin, no curves if curves simply from bone structure that cannot be removed with damaging the body for the rest of their lives. Public viewers of these commercials, tv shows, movies, magazine ads, brochures are quickly to view these ads and instantly begin thinking of ways in which their body image can be emulated to what they have seen advertised.

Facts on the misconception pertaining to public figures:

There are so much that is deceiving to the public eye when viewing majority of these ads, whether television or magazine.

- Majority of these models has eating disorders or some type psychological

issues, whether professionally diagnosed or not, there are psychological issues present. For example, most models are pressured to uphold a certain body image in doing so, whatever it takes to retain this certain type body image, the models will go to extreme measures to obtain, such as: diets, regurgitating uncontrollably, laxatives, starvation and so forth.

- Advertisers use a lot of Photoshop and other photo editing software to make the models appear smaller than what they actually are in person.
- Some of these models has even turned to drug usage that will help them in losing weight and obtain the skinny body image, such as, cocaine which will suppress the appetite, methamphetamine which will increase energy tremendously therefore causing fat to burn at a higher rate than average.
- Sometimes advertisers will use what is called a green screen which gives them the opportunity to use a body double, alter the appearance of an individual, the list is endless.

All of these are things that are not publicly known therefore causing the continued increase rate of falsifications in body image, psychological issues, deaths, attempted & successful suicides, starvation, malnourishment, dehydration, etc

Men are expected to have self-discipline in that fitness and healthy eating comes automatic, they are not expected to be overweight or not have the perfect body image, which leads men to having psychological issues.

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