Body Image in Today's Scenario

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Abstract

A person's body image is thought to be, in part, a product of their personal experiences, personality, and various social and cultural forces. A person's sense of their own physical appearance, usually in relation to others or in relation to some cultural "ideal," can shape their body image. A person's perception of their appearance can be different from how others actually perceive them. Advances in technology and in particular the rise of the mass media have caused normal concerns about how we look to become obsessions. These images certainly contribute to the body-hatred and to some of the resulting eating problems, which range from bulimia to compulsive overeating, to simply being obsessed with controlling one's appetite. But body image can be regain and boost by some means which are mention the main body.

Introduction:

Body image refers to a person's feelings of the aesthetics and sexual attractiveness of their own body. The phrase body image was first coined by the Austrian neurologist and psychoanalyst Paul Schilder in his book The Image and Appearance of the Human Body (1935). Human society has at all times placed great value on beauty of the human body, but a person's perception of their own body may not correspond to society's standards.

The concept of body image is used in numerous disciplines, including psychology, medicine, psychiatry, psychoanalysis, philosophy and cultural and feminist studies. The term is also often used in the media. Across these disciplines and media there is no consensus definition.

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body image. A person's perception of their appearance can be different from how others actually perceive them.

A 2007 report by the American Psychological Association found that a culture-wide sexualization of girls (and women) was contributing to increased female anxiety associated with body image(2007). Similar findings associated with body image were found by an Australian government Committee report on the sexualization of children in the media. However, other scholars have expressed concern that these claims are not based on solid data (Ferguson,2011).

Throughout history it has been extremely difficult for people to live up to the standards of society and what they believe the ideal body is. There are many factors that lead to a person's body image, some of these include: family dynamics, biological predispositions (e.g., depression and anxiety), and cultural expectations (e.g., media and politics). People are constantly told and shown the cosmetic appeal of weight loss and are warned about the risks of obesity; this is something that can lead to a change in a person's body image (Derenne, J. L., Beresin E. V., 2006)

Body image can have a wide range of psychological effects and physical effects. According to Dr. Aric Sigman, a British biologist, some women who see underweight women will have an immediate change in brain chemistry which diminishes self-esteem and can increase self-loathin (Sydney Morning Herald,2010). Commentators note that people who have a low body image will try to alter their bodies in some way, such as by dieting or undergoing cosmetic surgery.

Significance of Body Image

Body image is a widespread preoccupation. In one study of college students, 74.4% of the normal-weight women stated that they thought about their weight or appearance "all the time" or "frequently." But the women weren't alone; the study also found that 46% of the normal-weight men surveyed responded the same way.

Encouragement to focus on appearance is at an all-time high in this culture, and with it comes the potential for a significant increase in negative body image. According to the authors of The Adonis Complex, "There's often a vicious circle here: the more a person focuses on his body, the worse he tends to feel about how he looks – obsession breeds discontent."

Poor body image increases the risk for extreme weight/body control behaviours. Researchers have found that increased preoccupation with appearance and body dissatisfaction put people at greater risk for engaging in dangerous practices to control weight and size. Extreme dieting, exercise compulsion, laxative abuse, vomiting, smoking and use of anabolic steroids have all been associated with negative body image.

Impact of media and social networking sites on youth

Concern with appearance is not just an aberration of Modern Western culture. Every period of history has had its own standards of what is and is not beautiful, and every contemporary society has its own distinctive concept of the ideal physical attributes. In the 19th Century being beautiful meant wearing a corset – causing breathing and digestive problems or

wearing very tight suit (India) in which waking is difficult. Now we try to diet and exercise ourselves into the fashionable shape – often with even more serious consequences.

But although we resemble our ancestors and other cultures in our concern about appearance, there is a difference in degree of concern. Advances in technology and in particular the rise of the mass media has caused normal concerns about how we look to become obsessions.

3 reasons of how concern became obsession by media:

- Thanks to the media, we have become accustomed to extremely rigid and uniform standards of beauty.
- TV, billboards, magazines etc mean that we see 'beautiful people' all the time, more often than members of our own family, making exceptional good looks seem real, normal and attainable.
- Standards of beauty have in fact become harder and harder to attain, particularly for women. The current media ideal of thinness for women is achievable by less than 5% of the female population.

Studies at Stanford University and the University of Massachusetts found that 70% of college women say they feel worse about their own looks after reading women's magazines. And a 2006 study published in the journal of Psychology of Men and Masculinity showed that not only did watching prime-time television and music videos appear to make men more uncomfortable with themselves, but that the discomfort led to sexual problems and risky behaviours. "People see the same images over and over and start to believe it's a version of reality," says Deborah Schooler, one of the researchers. "If those bodies are real and that's possible, but you can't attain it, how can you not feel bad about your own body?"

The media is a powerful conduit for transmission and reinforcement of cultural beliefs and values, and while it may not be exclusively responsible for determining the standards for physical attractiveness, it makes escaping frequent exposure to these images and attitudes almost impossible. Advertising, in particular, creates a seductive and toxic mix of messages for men and women. Jean Kilbourne, creator of the award-winning documentary Killing Us Softly, and author of Can't Buy My Love: How Advertising Changes The Way We Think and Feel, says the impact on eating problems and body image may not be absolute, but it is real:

"…these images certainly contribute to the body-hatred…and to some of the resulting eating problems, which range from bulimia to compulsive overeating, to simply being obsessed with controlling one's appetite. Advertising does promote abusive and abnormal attitudes about eating, drinking, and thinness. It thus provides fertile soil for these obsessions to take root in and creates a climate of denial in which these diseases flourish."

Revitalise your Body Image

- Talk back to the media. All media and messages are constructs – NOT reflections of reality. We can choose to use a filter that helps us to understand what an advertiser wants us to believe and then choose whether we want to believe that message. We can also talk back when we see an ad or hear a message that makes us feel bad about ourselves.

- De-emphasize numbers. Neither weight nor Body Mass Index tell us anything substantial about body composition and health. Eating habits, activity patterns, and other self-care choices are much more important. For a more complete discussion of healthy weight, see our page on Weight Concerns.
- Stay off of the scale. It's really hard to cultivate an attitude of body acceptance and trust when you are basically climbing on the scale to ask if it's OK to feel good about yourself that day. It is ALWAYS OK to feel good about yourself – don't let a machine tell you any differently.
- Realize that you cannot change your body type : lightly muscled, bulky, or rounded, you need to appreciate your body and work with your genetic inheritance. As UCLA SNAC says, "Instead of thinking of it as a limit, think of it as your personal best."
- Stop comparing yourself to others. Your physiology is unique to you; you can't get a sense of your body's needs and abilities with someone else's body as a reference point. And the research has shown that frequent comparing tends to increase negative body image.
- Limit the "body checking" that you do throughout the day. Researchers have also found that negative body image is reinforced by lots of time in front of the mirror, or frequent checks of (perceived) body flaws. Instead, consider rearranging your living space so that you aren't running into full-length mirrors every time you turn around.
- Move and enjoy your body – not because you have to, but because it makes you feel strong, energized, and peaceful. Walking, swimming, biking, dancing, Ultimate Frisbee – there are many activities that emphasize pleasure rather than controlling your body.
- Spend time with people who have a healthy relationship with food, activity, and their bodies . It will make a difference in how you feel about these issues – and yourself. Also, remember to set a good example for others by refraining from "fat talk" when you are with friends and family. Think of it as the psychic equivalent of second-hand smoke: you don't want other people exposed to that, right?
- Practice thought -stopping when it comes to negative statements about yourself. Distract yourself, refuse to get into the comments, and focus on what you like about yourself instead. You CAN reprogram your self-talk about your body, and positive statements are needed to replace the old messages. This approach works over time, even if the positive self-talk feels awkward or forced in the beginning.
- Nurture your inner self . Body image is linked to self-esteem for men and women both, so engaging in pastimes that leave you feeling good can actually help you to feel comfortable in your own skin. Particularly helpful are activities that are relaxing, soothing, spiritual, or that allow us to connect to others. Remember: when we don't have ways to manage stress or anxiety, we are more susceptible to being critical of our bodies.
- Question the degree to which your self -esteem depends on your appearance. Although we are repeatedly told "Change Your Shape and Change Your Life," basing your happiness on this foundation is likely to lead to failure and frustration, and may prevent you from exploring ways to truly enhance your life.

- Broaden your perspective about health and beauty. Read books about body image, cultural pressures, or media literacy. Google some fine art images on the Web. Fine art collections show that a variety of bodies have been celebrated throughout the ages and in different cultures. Fine art doesn't exist to create a need for a product, so it isn't intended to leave you feeling inadequate or anxious. And spend some time with the new research on weight and health listed in our resources section – you'll be pleasantly illuminated.
- Recognize that size prejudice is a form of discrimination similar to other forms of discrimination. Assumptions that shape and size are indicators of character, morality, intelligence, or success are incorrect and unjust. Celebrate people you know who fly in the face of these generalizations.

CONCLUSION

A person's body image is thought to be, in part, a product of their personal experiences, personality, and various social and cultural forces. A person's sense of their own physical appearance, usually in relation to others or in relation to some cultural "ideal," can shape their body image. But that can be control and manipulate by some other reasons like social networking sites, media and comparison among ugly and beautiful in the mean of good or bad. In that case one should know how to regain and boost their body image by certain means which are mention in main part.

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