AN INTERVENTION FOR THE NEGATIVE INFLUENCE OF MEDIA ON BODY ESTEEM

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Since research suggests that media pressure to be thin causes individuals to have negative feelings about their appearances, this research aimed to test whether exposing college students to some common myths about female images in the media may be part of the solution to fostering a healthier body image. In this study, a 2 (Group: Experimental or Control) x 3 (Time: Baseline, Post Media Exposure, Post Media Truth Presentation) mixed design ANOVA was utilized with 80 women per group. Both groups completed the Body-Esteem Scale three times approximately two weeks apart each: at baseline, after media exposure, and after an intervention designed to educate women both about the typical female body and also about how the media often skews our perception of the typical female body. Interaction effects and post-hoc analyses revealed significant positive changes in the experimental group’s view of their overall body esteem, sexual attractiveness, and weight after a Media Truth Presentation, indicating that this intervention had a positive effect on women’s views about themselves. Also of note, the intervention appeared to be equally effective for both average- and over-weight women.

Keywords: Body Image, Media, Intervention, Women, Experiment

Research has shown that media exposure to unattainable physical perfection is detrimental to people, especially women, and that the detrimental effects are currently more the rule than the exception (Cash & Henry, 1995). Women may directly model unhealthy eating habits presented in the media, such as fasting or purging, because the media-portrayed thin ideal body type is related to eating pathology (Stice, Schupak-Neuberg, Shaw & Stein, 1994). Media exposure to female images that are thin and air-brushed is also associated with depression and lower self-esteem in the women who view them (Gerber, 2005).

There is clear evidence suggesting that the media’s typical portrayal of women in advertisements has a negative effect on the way women feel about themselves (e.g., Groesz, Levine & Murnen, 2002; Heineberg & Thompson, 1992; Jacobi & Cash, 1994). With much research demonstrating that negative cognitions and feelings occur when women are exposed to ultra-thin female images, more research should examine what can be done to reverse these consequences. Some have suggested that reducing the number of ultra-thin models and increasing the number of average-sized models may make a positive change in women’s perceptions of themselves (Pin-
has, Toner, Ali, Garfinkel & Stuckless, 1999). Others have suggested that women should be informed of the measures that are taken to alter many images in advertisements in order to clarify that humans typically do not naturally look like those illustrations, and therefore women should not compare their bodies with the illusions of perfection depicted in the media (Levine & Piran, 2004; Henderson-King, Henderson-King & Hoffman, 2001). Though there have been several ideas about how to reverse and even prevent such harmful comparisons, there has been limited empirical research assessing how well these suggested tactics actually alter the body esteem of women.

One notable exception is Fister and Smith’s recent study on the effects of exposing women to realistic images (2004). Their results indicated a strong relationship between high risk toward disordered eating and subsequent thinness expectancy endorsement, which refers to the expectancy that being thin will lead to self-improvement in general. Fister and Smith found that the association between initial risk for disordered eating and subsequent thinness expectancy endorsement was much smaller in an average-size model image-viewing group than in a control or thin model image-viewing group. Therefore, the high-risk women who were exposed to average-sized model images were less likely to endorse thinness/restricting expectancies than those participants who were exposed to thin model or home décor images. They found that as little as one exposure to images of average-sized women had a counteractive effect on high-risk women’s expectancies that thinness leads to over-generalized self-improvement. The positive results of this study speak to the need for more research in this area. The current study aims to expand this research base by exposing female participants to typical magazine ads and then assessing how a subsequent intervention will affect their body esteem levels. This study is also unique in that it will assess whether effects related to the intervention vary according to the weight status of the participant.

When attractiveness norm cues are rather subtle, women engage in unconscious processing and may be more susceptible to accepting these ideal images as an appropriate point of comparison. For example, one magazine ad for a cigarette lighter shows a picture of a thin woman with the headline reading, “Express your lighter side.” The underlying message is that women should be thin and using this product may help to achieve that goal. On the other hand, if those cues become more obvious through accompanying commentary, women may actively process this information and therefore may question and resist these attractiveness norms (Henderson-King et al., 2001). Therefore, it has been suggested that exposing myths about female images in the media may be the key to increasing women’s satisfaction with their own bodies (Cattarin, Thompson, Thomas & Williams, 2000). Only two studies to date have attempted to do so.

In the first, researchers looked at the effects of media images on women who were at risk for body image disturbance and how such effects could be reduced (Posavac, Posavac & Weigel, 2001). The participants were selected on the basis of
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elevated body image disturbance, assigned to either the experimental or control condition intervention, and assigned to view either fashion model images or control images. Body image disturbance levels were assessed after media exposure to determine the effectiveness of the experimental intervention in reducing media-induced body image disturbance. There were three experimental intervention videos and one control intervention. The "Artificial Beauty" video argued that media images are inappropriate comparisons because techniques are used to create the flawless looks shown in the media. While the "Genetic Realities" intervention video presented the idea that media images are inappropriate targets of comparison because most women are genetically incapable of being as thin as the fashion model images, the "Combination" video focused on messages about both of the above concepts. The control intervention was "Parenting Skills." It was hypothesized that participants who received an intervention before the media exposure would be less likely to compare themselves with the media images than those who received the control intervention, and this was indeed manifested by the prevention of body image disturbance in the experimental but not the control groups. The results of this study suggest that interventions focusing on such issues may be useful in combating media-induced body image disturbance.

Another study used college women to evaluate the moderating effects of the extent to which these women internalized media ideals (Yamamiya, Cash, Melnyk, Posavac & Posavac, 2005). This study also examined the effects of the "Artificial Beauty" and "Genetic Realities" interventions employed in the previous study. It was thought that this sort of psychoeducational information would reduce the media-exposure effects that have been well-documented in other studies and that having individuals construct arguments against the thin-ideal based on the psychoeducational information would further reduce the effects. The results indicated that the exposure to thin-and-beautiful media images adversely affected the body image levels of those women with high internalization levels, while the media-literacy psychoeducation prior to the media exposure again prevented such an adverse effect. However, it was found that the pre-exposure dissonance-induction did not significantly enhance the preventative effects of the psychoeducation condition alone. Again, these results are promising and call for further research to explore other ways in which interventions may be used effectively.

The present study was conducted to advance the literature base regarding whether there is an advantage to exposing women to the truth about many models’ enhanced images in the media as well as facts about the average female figure. It was hypothesized that when women were exposed to the thin figures portrayed in the media, their body esteem would decrease (as previous research has shown) but that exposing the truth about many unattainable thin images in the media would significantly reverse this decreased level of body esteem. This work was based on the important work of the research teams described above and possesses several
unique components.

For example, prior methodology has presented the media intervention before exposure to typical media in order to determine a preventative effect. In this study, the typical media images are presented first, and then the information regarding media images and women’s bodies is given afterward in order to determine if any negative effects could be reversed. This aims to extend the ecological validity and clinical relevance of this research, as most people presenting in clinical settings with body image disturbance are only seen remedially (i.e., after they have been barraged with media images).

Also unique to this study, experimental effects were examined to determine if they were specific only to average- or over-weight women or generalizable to women of both weight statuses. This element is important because it is unknown whether average- and over-weight women will respond similarly to these types of interventions or whether specialized interventions are necessary for women of varying weights.

Method

Sample

This research was reviewed and approved by an institutional review board. One hundred sixty female college students, 80 experimental and 80 control, participated in order to receive credit for their General Psychology class requirements. Participants’ ages ranged from 18 to 45 years old ($M = 19.79$, $SD = 3.12$) and body mass index (BMI) levels ranged from 16.92 to 45.73 ($M = 24.57$, $SD = 5.25$). Approximately 81% identified themselves as Caucasian and 13% identified themselves as African American.

Participants were randomly assigned in order to ensure that there were no differences between the experimental and time control groups beyond those occurring by chance. The goal was to see the differences in the measures taken by the same participants after different conditions of the experiment, while the time control group was necessary to make sure that any effects that occurred were not simply due to the passage of time.

Design

A $2 \times 3$ (Group: Experimental or Control) x (Time: Baseline, Post Media Exposure, Post Media Truth Presentation) mixed design ANOVA was utilized in this study. Both the experimental and time control groups completed the BES (see below) during a baseline period early in the semester. Two to four weeks later, all participants were asked to return for a laboratory session. The experimental group viewed magazine advertisements featuring as their focal point thin, attractive women and was assessed with self-report materials described below for any effects of this media exposure, while the time control group also completed the BES a second time but with no media exposure. Another two to four weeks later, all participants returned for a final laboratory session. In this last session, the experimental group was given a presentation regarding truths about the average female figure and the alterations that are routinely made to media images. They were then assessed a third time to determine any effects of this pre-
sentation, while the control group again completed the BES one last time without any type of intervention.

**Instruments**

*Body Mass Index (BMI).*

Weight was recorded using a Mettler Toledo Wildcat model digital scale and height was assessed using a wall-mounted Seca stadiometer. Both measures were taken with shoes removed and were used to compute Body Mass Index (BMI) as kg/m² at the end of the second session. BMI was calculated to assess whether any effects found for the experimental group varied by the participants' weight status. Other body size information, such as shirt, pant, and shoe size, was collected as well to further the cover story suggesting that this study was about fashion.

*The Body-Esteem Scale (BES).*

The Body-Esteem Scale (Franzoi & Shields, 1984) was used to measure body esteem three times in both groups. For women, the scale is composed of 32 questions rating how the participant feels about parts of her own body. Participants chose from five response categories (have strong negative feelings, have moderate negative feelings, have no feeling one way or the other, have moderate positive feelings, have strong positive feelings). The questions load onto three factors: Sexual Attractiveness, Weight Concern, and Physical Condition. Lower scores indicate lower levels of body satisfaction, with total scores ranging from 32 to 160. Reports indicate test-retest reliability coefficients of .75, .81, and .87 for the three factors, as well as adequate convergent and discriminant validity over a three month period (Franzoi & Herzog, 1986). Internal consistencies in this study were .93 at baseline, .93 at post-1, and .94 at post-2.

*Media Exposure Presentation.*

This presentation was prepared using ten images from popular magazine advertisements that met the criterion of having as their focal point a thin, attractive female. The images were projected onto a screen for all participants in the experimental group to view together at once. Each image was projected for one minute. During the viewing of each image, experimental participants had at their desk a packet containing a brief questionnaire. For each image, there were two questions to complete, a question about a specific detail of the ad, such as the color of an article of clothing, and one question regarding the participants' preferences about the models' fashion styles. This was done to ensure that they paid close attention to the images. All participants answered all of the detail questions correctly, and therefore no data were excluded from the study because of inattention to the presentation. This presentation was modeled after Fister and Smith's (2004) reversibility study.

*Media Truth Presentation.*

The purpose of this thirty-minute presentation was to communicate information about both the routine alterations made to women’s physical appearances in many media images by such means as airbrushing, tinting, limb lengthening and removal of unattractive features (e.g., cellulite, wrinkles, dark circles under the eyes), and to
present statistics about the average female body and appearance. This information was gathered from several sources, including journals, books, and websites, and was presented to the experimental group orally by the examiner. This presentation is similar to the Combination Intervention recommended by Posavac et al. (2001). Additionally, corresponding web-based examples that displayed the discrepancies between pre- and post-airbrushed/altered models were projected onto the screen.

**Procedure**

All participants were recruited from the department's participant pool, and completed a baseline assessment measure during a mass testing session involving all female students enrolled in Introductory Psychology. Then, interested participants attended their first laboratory session two to four weeks later under the guise that they were participating in a study about self-esteem and fashion. Participants who indicated they would continue to the laboratory portion of this experiment were randomly assigned to either an experimental or control group. Upon entering the first laboratory session of the study, all participants completed an informed consent document. Then, the experimental group was told, "Today you will be looking at magazine advertisements with models wearing various styles of clothing and asked to think about how you feel you would look in each outfit, and then you will be given a measure to complete." They then viewed the Media Exposure presentation and subsequently completed the BES. Control participants were told, "Thank you for your participation in this study regarding fashion. Today we just need you to complete one measure and then you are free to leave." No presentation was given to the control group. During this first laboratory session, all participants' levels of body esteem were assessed by the BES for a second time (the first was done in a mass testing session) and at the end of this session all participants were weighed and had their height measured and completed questionnaires regarding their clothing sizes to further the cover story.

Finally, all participants returned to the laboratory for a second time two to four weeks after the first laboratory session. (All participants were given a reminder slip and reminder e-mail the weekend before their second laboratory session in order to maximize the return rate. Every participant who participated in the first laboratory session returned to participate in the second, leading to a return rate of 100%). During the second laboratory session, the experimental group viewed the Media Truth Presentation while no presentation was given to the control group. All participants completed the BES a third time, and all participants were thanked and debriefed at the end of the study.

**Results**

Participants assigned to either the experimental condition or the control condition did not significantly differ in their age (experimental \( M = 20.00 \), control \( M = 19.58 \)), BMI (experimental \( M = 24.22 \), control \( M = 24.91 \)), or baseline total BES (experimental \( M = 109.54 \), control \( M = 108.10 \)) (all \( p > .05 \)). Mean scores and standard deviations were calculated for the
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Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Total Body Esteem (BES), and the subscales of Sexual Attractiveness, Weight Concern, and Physical Condition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measurement Time</th>
<th>Post Media Exposure</th>
<th>Post Media Truth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dependent Variable</td>
<td>Baseline</td>
<td>Condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Body esteem</td>
<td>Exp</td>
<td>109.54 (21.92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>108.10 (18.43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual attractiveness</td>
<td>Exp</td>
<td>48.48 (8.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>48.53 (7.39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight concern</td>
<td>Exp</td>
<td>29.63 (10.59)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>29.04 (9.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical condition</td>
<td>Exp</td>
<td>31.44 (6.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>30.54 (6.32)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) = significantly different from Baseline
\(^b\) = significantly different from Post Media Exposure
\(^c\) = significantly different from Control

full BES test score as well as the factor scores of the BES for each group. The descriptive statistics for both conditions are presented in Table 1. Four 2 (Group: Experimental or Control) x 3 (Time: Baseline, Post Media Exposure, Post Media Truth Presentation) mixed design analysis of variances (ANOVAs) were conducted, one for the total BES, one for each of the three BES factors. Since the homogeneity of variance assumption was violated for each of these ANOVAs, the Greenhouse-Geisser modifier was used for the global tests for effect.
Means for the total BES scores can be found in Figure 1. For the total BES score, there was a significant main effect for time, $F(1.64, 258.92) = 16.77, p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .10$. There was also a significant interaction between condition and time, $F(1.64, 258.92) = 9.67, p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .06$. There was no significant main effect for group ($p > .05$). Follow-up ANOVAs done to explore the interaction indicated no significant effect of time for the control condition ($p > .05$) but a significant time effect for the experimental condition, $F(1.55, 122.29) = 22.65, p < .01$. To see specifically where the differences occurred over time for the experimental group, post hoc paired samples t tests with the Bonferroni correction were run, using a per comparison p-value of .017. The mean total body esteem level after the Media Truth Presentation ($M = 117.18, SD = 21.97$) was significantly greater than the mean total body esteem level after the Media Exposure Presentation ($M = 111.50, SD = 22.33$), $t(79) = -5.10, p < .01$, indicating that the Media Truth Presentation had a positive effect on the participants' total BES scores in the experimental condition. The mean total body esteem level after the Media Exposure Presentation was not significantly different from the mean total body esteem level at baseline ($p > .017$).

Means for the Weight Concern factor can be found in Figure 2. Analysis of variance showed that for the Weight Concern factor that there was a main effect for time, $F(1.75, 276.55) = 14.90, p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .09$, and for the interaction, $F(1.73, 272.98) = 8.92, p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .05$. There was no significant main effect for group ($p > .05$). Follow-up ANOVAs were run for the control and the experimental conditions, finding no significant main effect of time on the feeling about weight for the control group ($p > .05$) but a significant effect of time for the experimental group, $F(1.67, 132.09) = 17.53, p < .01$. Post hoc paired samples t tests, with a Bonferroni correction and a per comparison alpha p-value of .017, were run to assess where the effects were. It was found that the mean of positive thoughts about weight after the Media Truth Presentation ($M = 33.25, SD = 10.19$) was significantly higher than the mean of positive thoughts about weight after the Media Exposure Presentation ($M = 30.05, SD = 10.62$), $t(79) = -4.99, p < .01$, indicating that the Media Truth Presentation had a positive influence on how the participants felt about their weight. The mean of positive thoughts about weight after the Media Exposure Presentation was not significantly different from the mean at baseline ($p > .017$).

Means for the Sexual Attractiveness factor can be found in Figure 3. For the Sexual Attractiveness factor, there was a significant main effect for time, $F(1.73, 272.98) = 5.00, p = .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .03$, and for the interaction between time and group, $F(1.73, 272.98) = 7.70, p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .05$. There was no significant main effect for group ($p > .05$). ANOVAs for both the control and the experimental conditions were run for the Sexual Attractiveness factor, finding a significant effect of time only for the experimental condition, $F(1.73; 136.81) = 13.98, p < .01$. To explore these differences, post hoc paired samples t tests with a Bonferroni
Figure 1. Mean total Body Esteem Scale (BES) scores for experimental and control groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Experimental</th>
<th>Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baseline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Media Exposure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Intervention</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Mean Weight Concern scores for experimental and control groups.

Note: The higher the score on the Weight Concern subscale, the better the participants felt about their weights.
correction were run, using a per comparison $p$-value of .017. The mean sexual attractiveness level increased from baseline ($M = 48.48, SD = 8.07$) to the Media Exposure Presentation ($M = 49.70, SD = 8.06$), $t(79) = -2.55, p = .013$, and the Media Truth Presentation ($M = 50.91, SD = 7.99$) was significantly greater than the mean sexual attractiveness level after the Media Exposure Presentation, $t(19) = -3.33, p = .01$.

For the Physical Condition factor, the only significant effect found was a main effect for time, $F(1.87, 295.60) = 9.46, p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .06$. The lack of an interaction between time and group indicates that although physical condition scores increased across the conditions of the time variable, they increased for both the control and experimental group equally.

**BMI Analyses**

In order to determine whether the effects on the experimental group varied by participants' BMI, a 2 (BMI: Average or High) x 3 (Time: Baseline, Post Media Exposure, Post Media Truth Presentation) mixed design ANOVA was utilized. Originally, the authors sought to examine three different BMI groups: underweight (BMI = below 18.5), average-weight (BMI = 18.6 - 24.9), and overweight (BMI = 25 or greater), but due to having too few participants in the underweight range ($n = 6$), we were limited to only using average- and over-weight groups. The six underweight participants were excluded from the following study analyses, while the remaining experimental participants were divided into two groups: average and high BMI, using a cutoff point of 25 (this cutoff is the standard criterion for being considered normal...
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weight versus overweight (Gray, 1989)). There were 47 experimental participants whose BMI classified them as normal weight (average BMI of this group = 21.85, range = 18.76 – 24.85) and 27 whose BMI classified them as overweight (average BMI of this group = 29.69, range = 25.15 – 44.72). Mixed design ANOVAs were run for total BES scores, as well as for Sexual Attractiveness and Weight Concern, because these were variables in which significant interactions were found.

For total BES scores there was a significant main effect for time, $F(1.55, 111.32) = 16.72, p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .19$, indicating that the experimental participants’ body esteem increased over time. There was also a significant main effect for BMI, $F(1, 72) = 6.30, p = .014$, partial $\eta^2 = .08$, indicating that the total body esteem level for the average BMI participants was significantly higher than that of high BMI participants. There was no significant interaction of BMI and time ($p > .05$), indicating that the increase in BES scores that occurred in the experimental group as a whole after the Media Truth Presentation did not differ whether the participants were normal weight or overweight.

For the Weight Concern factor, there was a significant main effect for time, $F(1.72, 123.66) = 13.43, p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .16$, indicating the experimental participants’ positive feelings about their own weight increased from baseline. There was also a significant main effect for BMI, $F(1, 72) = 15.30, p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .18$, indicating a significant difference in weight concern levels for the average BMI participants and high BMI participants. There was no significant effect for the interaction ($p > .05$), indicating that the increase in Weight Concern scores that occurred in the experimental group as a whole after the Media Truth Presentation did not differ whether the participants were normal weight or overweight.

For the Sexual Attractiveness factor, there was a significant main effect for time, $F(1.72, 123.66) = 11.91, p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .14$, indicating the experimental participants’ levels of sexual attractiveness increased over time with no effect of BMI. There was no significant main effect for BMI and no interaction of time and BMI ($p > .05$), again indicating that the effect of the manipulation on participants was not moderated by BMI.

**Discussion**

The results of this study on improving body image through providing information on average women’s bodies and alterations made to print media are encouraging and support previous research in this area (Fister & Smith, 2004; Posavac et al., 2001; Yamamiya et al., 2005). Significant interaction effects on the variables of total Body Esteem, Sexual Attractiveness, and Weight Concern were analyzed and revealed significant increases in positive feelings about themselves after the Media Truth Presentation that were not merely the result of passing time. Therefore, informing women about what the average female really looks like and about the alterations of images in the media may have had a positive effect on women’s views about their own bodies. When considering the bombardment of media messages, it is encouraging that such an effect
occurred after only a single, brief intervention. To our knowledge, this is the first study to examine the effects of providing an intervention after exposure to media images and the results are encouraging.

Another unique aspect of this study was that experimental participants' BMIs were used in order to determine whether the effects found for the Body Esteem level, Sexual Attractiveness, and Weight Concern varied by participants' weight status. A lack of interaction effects on these variables indicates that this change occurred for all experimental women, regardless of their weight status. This is encouraging, as it suggests that this intervention was equally effective for both average- and over-weight women. Such a finding is important because it speaks to the notion that a single treatment modality for body image distortions may be appropriate for average- and over-weight women. Because underweight women were not assessed in this study due to the small number of them in the sample, it is still unclear whether underweight women would benefit from such an intervention.

In the experimental group, it was hypothesized that there would be a significant negative trend in BES scores from baseline after the Media Exposure Presentation and then a significant positive trend after the Media Truth Presentation. While the latter hypothesis was supported, unlike past research (e.g., Fister & Smith, 2004; Garner, 1997) this study found no negative impact of exposure to thin images on the women. This lack of finding could be due to the fact that the women depicted in the images were not as thin as some images that are presented in the media. Also, the models in this study may have been more fully clothed (i.e., bodies less visible) due to the cover story that this study was to assess the impact of fashion on women’s feeling about themselves. However, several studies have already established the negative impact that thin images have on the media, and that was not the primary focus of this study. Rather, this study primarily sought to examine whether telling women the truth about average women and showing them the alterations that are often made to media images had an effect on women’s body esteem and whether average- and over-weight women would be equally affected by the intervention. Indeed, it was found that such an intervention does positively impact women’s body esteem levels, regardless of weight status.

Even though no changes over time were anticipated for the control group, the factor of physical condition of both groups significantly increased over both time periods without any effect of the condition. Since the baseline measure was taken at the beginning of the spring semester, participants could have perhaps been influenced by a decrease in physical conditioning due to the preceding holiday season. The increase of physical condition over time may be related to the fact that spring break was scheduled for a couple of weeks after the last measure was taken. Participants may have been working out and toning their bodies for the break.

There were other limitations to this study, beside the fact that the thin images shown in the Media Exposure Presenta-
tion could have been more extreme and more exposed with a different storyline. In addition, the women participated in the study in small groups and therefore some women could have been reacting to the bodies of the other participants and not the models. However, since the groups were randomly assigned, it is unlikely that the experimental and control groups were exposed to unequal exposures to peer body types. Future research should take these limitations into consideration, as well as examine whether non-college women would respond differently. Participants in this study were predominantly Caucasian, so it would also be beneficial to assess whether other ethnicities respond differently to the truth about images presented in the media. In addition, longitudinal studies would be useful to determine whether positive effects gained from this sort of intervention will last over time.

Because there was a significant effect for the interaction between condition and total Body Esteem and its factors of Sexual Attractiveness and Weight Concern, further research should be conducted to assess other effects of telling women the truth about what the average female really looks like and routine image modifications. Especially with today’s current heavy degree of media exposure, it is important to assess the impact that this has on women’s thoughts and feelings. The increasing prevalence of eating disorders makes it imperative that researchers continue to study the aspects that decrease women’s body satisfaction and look for ways in which to increase their satisfaction with themselves. Finding out what we can do to raise women’s body satisfaction may be a key to decreasing the rates of eating disorders.

References


