

Media's Focus on Ideal Body Shape Can Boost Women's Body Satisfaction momentarily.

New Research from Ohio State University. ScienceDaily (Apr. 11, 2011)
<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/04/110411121557.htm>



DR LEON (AMA Victoria spokesperson – Weightloss & Nutrition)

Research reveals women gain momentary motivation and inspiration from health and beauty magazines showcasing “ideal” body shape, particularly women actively dieting. But as dieting takes time and effort, and women still report their weight as the greatest source of unhappiness – it’s a short-term high which dissipates to the usual dissatisfaction.

DR LEON has spoken about the media use of unrealistic body images (in health and beauty magazines), expectations for quick weight-loss (Biggest Loser) and products promising rapid weight-loss (detox and diet programs) – and has medically sound, metabolic based practical advice for people keen to achieve sustainable long-term weightloss.

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In an April 2011 research report, when college-age women view magazines for five straight days that only included images of women with thin, idealized body types: the readers' own body satisfaction improved – but they were also more likely to have engaged in dieting behaviors such as cutting meals or carbohydrates.

That suggests these women may be inspired by the images they view and become momentarily hopeful that they can improve their own body shape said Silvia Knobloch-Westerwick, co-author of the study - Ohio State University.

"But it is a losing battle. Women are motivated by these fitness and beauty magazines ... however, research shows that most diets fail and they're eventually going to be back being unsatisfied with their bodies." Silvia Knobloch-Westerwick.

"The magazines attract women because they give a short-term boost in body image, but they also set up unrealistic expectations. When women don't achieve the body they want, they are disappointed and then likely come back to the magazines for more advice and inspiration," she said.

Women in the study indicated that their body weight was the aspect of their life they were least satisfied with.

Overall, Knobloch-Westerwick said the results show that magazines which highlight the thin ideal are good at motivating women in the short run. But the question is, to what end?

"If the message was just how you could improve your health by eating right and exercising, that would be great," she said. "But a message that says you can easily drop 10 pounds in a month, get great thighs by exercising five minutes a day and look like a supermodel -- those kinds of messages just set you up for failure and disappointment."