

The State of Affairs: Behavioral Health Needs of Young Girls

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Why Should We Worry?

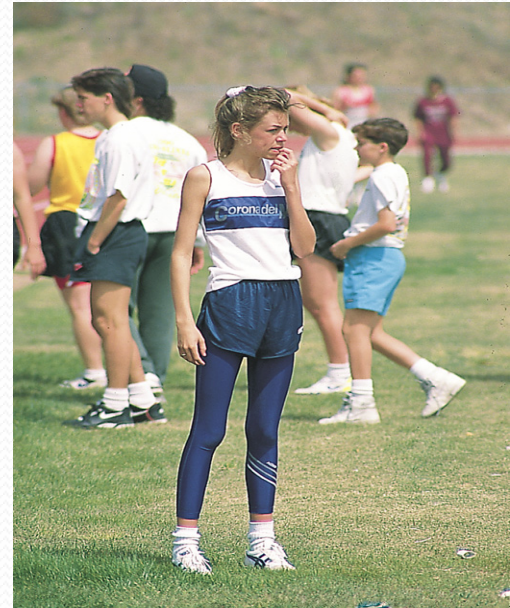
- Girls are at higher risk for:
 - Depression
 - Self-harm
 - Low self-esteem
 - Eating disorders
 - And more...
- Prevention and early intervention are key

Where Do We Start?

- Awareness
- Screening
- Collaborative care

Awareness

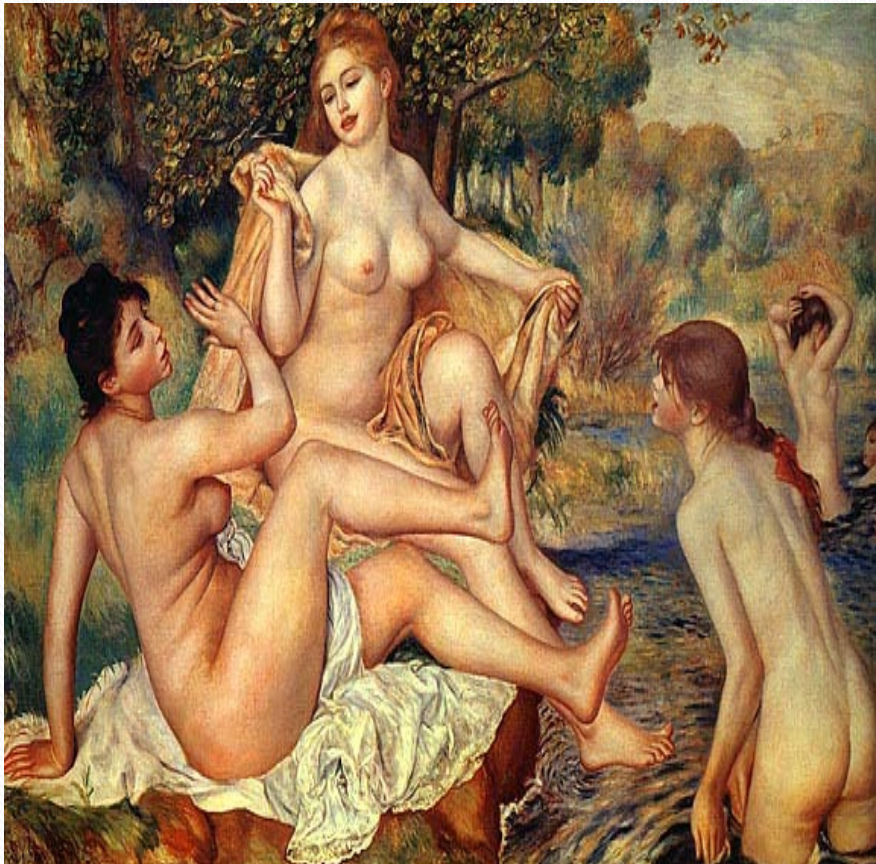
- Contributing factors:
 - Searching for identity
 - Physical, cognitive, and social changes
 - Vulnerable emotional state
 - Stressful environment filled with changes



Challenges Facing Girls

- Body Image/Self-Esteem
- Bullying
- Depression
- Suicide
- Self-harm (e.g., cutting)
- Substance Use/Abuse
- Abuse
- Weight
 - Eating Disorders
 - Obesity

Changing Times: History of the Female “Image Ideal”



Until the early 1900's, for a woman to have extra weight on her body and look voluptuous was a sign of good health and wealth

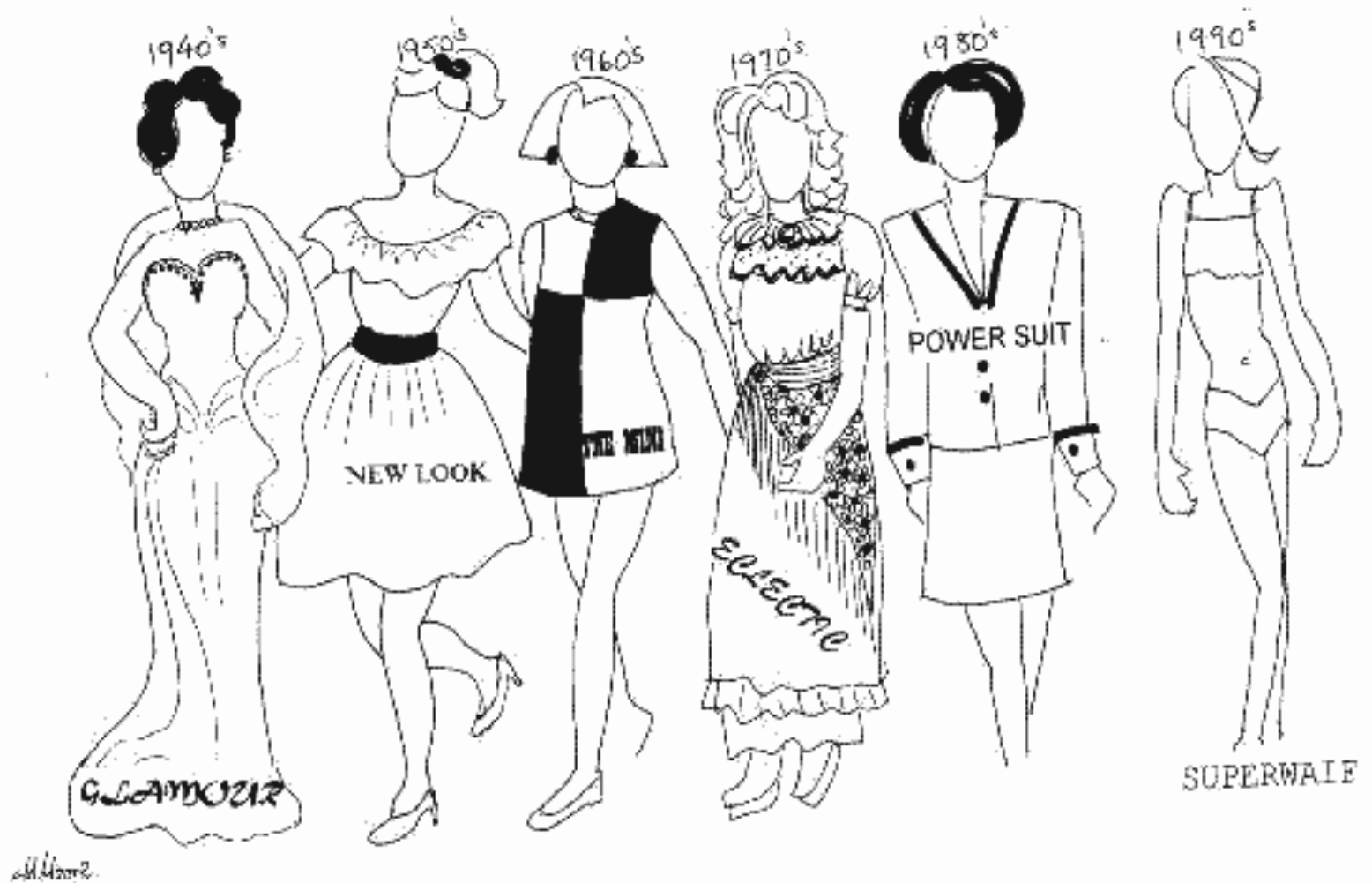
1950's Ideal Female Body Image: Marilyn Monroe



And Here We Are Today...



Culture's Factors in Body Image



Body Image through the Decades

Media Messages About Weight

- A “perfect” body is normal and attainable
- The “ends” are worth most any “means”
- Fat phobia is a societal norm
- Rejection of overweight people
- Acceptance of the drive for thinness (or fitness)

Bullying

- Occurs most frequently in middle school
 - 8.5% bullied “sometimes”
 - 8.4% bullied once a week or more
- Being bullied about looks is common
- Boys are more often hit, slapped, or pushed
- Girls more frequently experience verbal bullying (taunting, sexual comments, rumors)

Nansel et al., 2001, JAMA

Abuse

- 9 to 28% of women report some type of sexual abuse/assault as a child
- 30-40% of girls and 13% of boys experience sexual abuse during childhood

World Health Organization, 2001

- Boys are more likely than girls to experience physical abuse
- BUT, physical abuse is more detrimental for girls

Thompson et al., 2004


Substance Use

- 13.5 % of females ages 12 to 17 drink alcohol
- 9.8% of females ages 12 to 17 use illicit drugs
- From 2002 to 2010, smoking among girls decreased from 13.6% to 8.1%

www.oas.samhsa.gov

Depression

- Up to 2.5% of children & 8.3% of adolescents suffer from depression
 - During adolescence, girls are two times as likely as boys to develop depression
 - Depression causes increased risk for substance abuse and suicidal behavior
 - Depression often goes unrecognized by families and physicians
 - Warning signs of depressive disorders are viewed as normal mood swings
 - Reluctant to "label"
 - Early intervention is critical to healthy emotional, social, and behavioral development
 - 7% of teens with MDD may commit suicide as a young adult
- <http://www.about-teen-depression.com/teen-depression.html> (NIH)



“The death of a 16-year-old boy Monday night in Palo Alto was believed to be the fourth suicide of a Gunn High School student since May. In all four cases, the teenagers jumped into the path of an oncoming commuter train operated by Caltrain.”

ABC News; Netter, 2009

Warning Signs

- Frequent, vague somatic complaints (e.g., headaches, stomachaches, tiredness)
- Frequent school absences or poor academic performance
- Attempts to run away
- Increased irritability, anger, or crying
- Being “bored”
- Lack of interest in being with peers
- Alcohol or substance abuse
- Social isolation
- Highly sensitive to rejection or failure
- Dangerous behavior
- Relationships problems

Other Risk Factors

- Stress
- Smoking
- Recent loss
- Break-up
- Attentional, conduct, or learning disorders
- Chronic illnesses
- Abuse or neglect
- Other trauma

Self-harm

- As many as 1 in 5 girls between 10 and 18 cut or burning themselves with matches, etc.
- Study at Yale: high rates of self-harm in 10- to 14-year-old girls

Sax, 2010

Major Eating Abnormalities Often Have Their Origins in Childhood

42% of girls age 6 to 9: “want to be thinner”

81% of girls age 10: “afraid of being fat”

Pre-teen years (to lose weight):

- » 50% exercise
- » 50% diet
- » 5% take diet pills or laxatives
- » Many smoke

15% of young women heading to college already have substantially disordered eating attitudes and behaviors

National Eating Disorders Screening Program 2001

- 4,639 students; 152 high schools; 30 states
- Mean age 15.9
- 59% female and 85% white.
- 12% of girls and 3% of boys reported vomiting in the last 3 months to control their weight
- 7% of girls and 6% of boys reported binge-eating once a week or more
- 14% of girls and 10% of boys reported exercising to control their weight once a day or more often.
- Overall, 30% of girls and 16% of boys reported ED symptoms severe enough to warrant evaluation

H.E.A.D.S.S. Psychosocial Screen for Adolescents

- **Home & Environment**
- **Education & Employment**
- **Activities**
- **Drugs**
- **Sexuality**
- **Suicide/Depression**

Screening Tips

- Don't be afraid to ask!
- Sometimes it's not what you say but how you say it...
 - Open ended questions, especially for substance abuse
 - “How often do you drink alcohol?” vs “You don't drink, right?”
 - “Do any of your friends do drugs?”
 - Exception: Bullying
- Assess for any significant changes (e.g., school performance, mood)
- Always screen for depression/s.i.
- If you are at all concerned—refer!

UCSD Eating Disorder Programs

- Adult and Adolescent Programs
 - Day Treatment
 - IOP
- Intensive Multifamily Group
 - Week long immersion in Maudsley FBT
- Brief medical stabilization (Rady Children's Hospital Med-Psych unit)

www.Eatingdisorders.ucsd.edu

Medical West at Rady Children's Hospital

- Med/Psych Unit for patients up to age 30
- Two patient populations:
 - Eating disorders
 - Med/Psych patients
- Multidisciplinary team: Psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, adolescent medicine physicians, nurses, dieticians

FRESH study

- Aims: Compare a parent-only to a parent + child treatment for childhood obesity on child body weight, nutritional intake , physical activity, and cost-effectiveness
- Recruit and randomize 150 overweight and obese children 2011-2013 in San Diego
- Two locations: La Jolla and City Heights
- Treatment is 6 months of weekly group meetings

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Thank you!