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Weight Preoccupation as a Function of Observed Physical Attractiveness: Ethnic Differences Among Normal-Weight Adolescent Females

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Objective To examine the association between observer ratings of physical attractiveness and weight preoccupation for female adolescents, and to explore any ethnic differences between Caucasian, African-American, and Hispanic females. **Methods** Normal-weight female adolescents who had participated in the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health in-home Wave II survey were included ($n = 4,324$). Physical attractiveness ratings were made *in vivo* by interviewers. Using logistic regression models stratified by ethnicity, the associations between observer-rated attractiveness and weight preoccupation were examined after controlling for demographics, measured body mass index (BMI) and psychosocial factors. **Results** Caucasian female adolescents perceived as being more attractive reported significantly greater weight preoccupation compared with those rated as being less attractive. Observed attractiveness did not relate to weight preoccupation among African-American or Hispanic youth when controlling for other factors. **Conclusions** For Caucasian female adolescents, being perceived by others as more attractive may be a risk factor for disordered eating.

Key words: attractiveness; dieting; disordered eating; racial differences; weight preoccupation.

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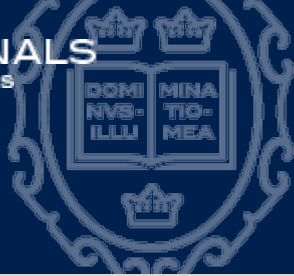
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