

[\[Print Version\]](#)

[\[PubMed Citation\]](#) [\[Related Articles in PubMed\]](#)

The Angle Orthodontist: Vol. 68, No. 6, pp. 487–496.

Soft tissue evaluation of contemporary Caucasian and African American female facial profiles

Robert E. Sutter, Jr., DDS, MS;^b Patrick K. Turley, DDS, MSD, MEd^{a, c}

^aDr. Patrick K. Turley, Section of Orthodontics, UCLA School of Dentistry, 10833 Le Conte Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90095, E-mail: pturley@dent.ucla.edu

^bRobert E. Sutter Jr., in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a certificate in Orthodontics, University of California at Los Angeles.

^cPatrick K. Turley professor and chair, Section of Orthodontics, University of California at Los Angeles.

ABSTRACT

Previous studies suggest that esthetic Caucasian profiles exhibit fuller lips than the norm for their race, while esthetic African American profiles are similar to those of esthetic Caucasians. The present study was undertaken to compare the profiles of female Caucasian and African American models and their nonmodel counterparts. Four groups of 30 subjects were evaluated: Caucasian models [CM], Caucasian controls [CC], African American models [AM], and African American controls [AC]. The models' profiles were photographed from current fashion magazines, the photos were scanned, and 17 landmarks were digitized. Each profile was standardized for size and oriented along the N'-Sn' line on a Macintosh 6115CD computer. Control photographs were processed in a similar manner. Twenty-six variables were measured for each profile. Means, ranges, and standard deviations were computed along with unpaired, two-tailed Student's *t*-tests ($p < 0.05$) to evaluate group differences. The results showed that for the AM and AC profiles, all but two of the 26 variables were similar. For the CM and CC profiles, eight variables demonstrated significant differences. Between-race comparisons demonstrated greater numbers of parameters that were significantly different: CM/AM with 18 and CM/AC, CC/AC, and CC/AM with 22 each. Most of the differences involved the lips. Vertical soft tissue proportions for the four groups did not follow a 40/20/40 ratio. Caucasian and African American models displayed significantly different profile characteristics. The African American models and controls showed similar profile features, whereas greater differences were observed between Caucasian models and controls. Based on our study, the African American profile currently presented in the mass media is not "Caucasian-like." In fact, it appears that Caucasian models display more ethnic features than African American models do Caucasian features, suggesting that previously held concepts of facial beauty may no longer apply.

KEY WORDS: Facial profile, Soft tissue, Caucasian, African American, Beauty.

Submitted: September 1996

Accepted: January 1998.

