

## A Review of Men's Body Image Literature: What We Know, and Need to Know

A Review of  
Men's Body  
Image Literature

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**Abstract** *In the contemporary world, fashionable bodies are socially constructed in light of current idealized images. Media portrayal of such images can have negative health implications. This issue has long been problematic for women. Nowadays, men are subject to more scrutiny regarding their bodies, although male body image has been studied far less than female body image. In this position paper based on a review of the major studies that have been conducted on men and body image, we summarize the findings from these state-of-the-art studies that have been recently published in academic journals. Three themes related to male body image were extracted: socio-cultural ideals, masculinity, and minority men. This study adds to the literature in that it demonstrates that men experience and view their bodies differently from women, though some behaviors, such as disordered eating, are similar. Other behaviors, such as the drive for muscularity, are couched in the context of the social construction of gender and power. Most of the studies were done on white, heterosexual populations of young men, and nearly all used quantitative research methods. Little research has been conducted on ethnic and sexual minorities. We conclude with a discussion of what we need to know, and to that end, we suggest future avenues of research.*

**Key words** *body image, men, masculinity, muscularity, idealized images*

### **Introduction**

In the contemporary world, men are now subject to increased importance placed upon their appearances. In industrialized societies, the fashionable male body is well-dressed, and is literally constructed in light of the idealized images operant in culture. In the field of fashion studies, men's fashion became a hot topic by the late 2000s, with the publication of two books on men's fashion (Reilly and Cosby, 2008, and McNeil and Karaminas, 2009) and writings in the popular press on the 'metrosexual' look (Kaiser, 2012). The media's portrayal and promotion of unrealistic idealized images have negative health implications, such as eating and exercise disorders, an issue that has long been problematic for women.

Non-verbal communication has become increasingly important in the contemporary world. While women's bodies have been extensively studied, male bodies have been relatively neglected as sites of cultural analysis. Long used to exploiting idealized images for women, the media have now turned to openly promoting idealized images for men. In 1983, non-verbal communication accounted for 35 per cent of communication (Birdwhistell, 1983), while 30 years later it accounts for up to 90 per cent of communication in inter-personal communications and negotiations (U.S. Department of Defense 2012). Nemeroff, Stein, Diehl, and Smolak (1994) suggest that males may be receiving increasing media messages regarding dieting, the ideal of muscularity, and cosmetic surgery as an option for achieving the idealized image. While all of these behaviors could have implications for physical and mental health, they also drive marketing strategies and profitability in the cosmetic, apparel, and weight loss industries.

The physical body is an integral component of men's appearance, and there is nothing more gendered than the dressed body. As underpinnings (undergarments) were used to provide the shape for outer-garments in the past, now in the contemporary era, the body itself is the underpinning that gives shape to fashion. Today, the basis of male fashion is the male body itself. Dress, and by extension the body, are sites where different symbolic meanings are constructed and contested. It is within and through the body that much of the social construction of masculinity takes place. At the micro-sociological level, the body is used to manufacture and negotiate the self within a socio-cultural context. Underlying these idealized images, but somewhat neglected in academic discourse, is the male body. The cultural ideal for body shape for men continues to favor athletic, V-shaped muscular men, whereas the ideal for women continues to be slender (Rosen and Gross 1987; Freson and Arthur 2008). Whereas women's bodies have been seen as malleable and change to fit the styles of the times, it is interesting to note that the ideal body for men continues to resemble the muscular ideal from Greek times (Bensen and Esten 1996; Eicher, Evenson and Lutz 2000).

For males, body image is linked to sexuality, conformity, identity, and peer hierarchy with muscularity as the underlying foundation. Within western culture, the term masculinity has been used interchangeably with muscularity and is thought to represent strength, power, respect, threat, admiration, and sexual virility. Increased numbers of messages concerning physical activity and health have been found in popular men's magazines. Extreme images of muscularity and fitness have been popularized by magazines such as *Men's Health*, *Maxim*, and *Men's Fitness*. Even brief exposure to these types of images has been shown to reduce self-esteem and increase body dissatisfaction in men (Arthur, Freson and Hayden 2006; Freson and Arthur 2008). The male body is now used to sell products as vigorously as women's bodies have been. In fact, according to Lonngvist (2014), male fashion has been eroticized and fashion has transformed men's power by exploiting the male body.

Cultural, societal and psychological forces shape the industrialized world's current obsession with idealized images. Scholars of dress and those in the fields of sociology, psychology, anthropology, and gender studies have examined idealized images with regard to women's bodies, but much less so with regard to men's body images. Because idealized images confine and restrict men's behavior through social control and the social construction of masculinity, body image issues can lead to behaviors that put

a man's health at risk. These may include body modifications (e.g. cosmetic surgery) and a variety of body image and eating disorder issues (e.g. Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia Nervosa, and Muscle Dysmorphia), as well as feelings of body dissatisfaction that undermine psychological well-being.

Body image is defined as 'a person's perceptions, thoughts, and feelings about his or her body' (Grogan 2008: 3), and includes experiential, psychological and attitudinal components. These perceptions, thoughts and feelings, in turn, affect the behaviors we engage in related to the body as we present our physical selves publicly to others. Appearance management behaviors such as eating, exercise and weight training, use of apparel and beauty products, grooming, and use of nutritional or performance supplements are typically directed by our body image perceptions and attitudes. Dimensions such as appearance orientation, appearance evaluation, and body satisfaction are frequently used to assess body image. The greater the orientation is to appearance, then the more likely one is to worry about appearance, take time monitoring his appearance, and engage in activities related to creating that appearance. Evaluation of one's appearance may provide feelings of pride or shame, and motivate behaviors that the individual believes would create a more attractive appearance.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the literature on body image as it relates to men's aesthetic, fitness and health issues. Though the majority of the body image literature relates to women, body image has been recently considered as a dynamic factor in the psychological, social, and cultural makeup of men. We reviewed pioneering articles in research journals and critical theory in books, as they began to appear in the mid 1990s to the present. Examples of representative journals included *Body Image*, *Psychology of Men and Masculinities*, *International Journal of Eating Disorders*, *Social and Clinical Psychology*, *Sex Roles*, and the *International Journal of Men's Health*. Examples of pioneering books were authored by social psychologists. Writings were found primarily in the context of Western culture, although we found limited non-Western literature. Three salient themes emerged in the literature review, and these themes critically connect fashion and health. Socio-cultural ideals, masculine identity, and sexual and racial minorities are the themes used as an organizational frame for this article, followed by a discussion section.

### ***Socio-cultural Ideals***

*Gender differences.* Men and women, while they may share generalized concerns about the body (e.g. dissatisfaction from idealized images, fitness and health disparities), do not necessarily share the same goals to increase body satisfaction. Men are more satisfied in general with their bodies than women (Grogan 2008), yet body dissatisfaction is reported by many men (Frederick, Forbes, Grigorian and Jacho 2007), especially with regard to muscularity. Men are also concerned with weight (Anderson and Bulik 2004). Whereas women are very concerned with being thin and placing high importance on weight, men are concerned with weight, body shape and function (i.e. strength). Using gender as the dependent variable, it was found that the independent variables of compensatory behaviors to prevent weight gain predicted the participants' gender. Women generally desire to lose weight; men want to both lose weight

and gain muscle mass (Pope, Phillips and Olivardia 2000). Compensatory behaviors such as aerobic exercise, calorie counting, dancing, gastroplasty surgery, diet programs (e.g. Jenny Craig, Nutrisystem, Optifast), smoking, and a vegetarian diet predicted female gender. Compensatory behaviors such as using amino acids, creatine, and protein supplements, dehydration, weight lifting, and martial arts predicted male gender. Other behaviors such as eating less, cutting down fats and sugars, eating fewer meals, skipping meals or fasting, predicted both genders. The authors concluded that these compensatory behaviors do indeed differ in nature and function by gender. Furthermore, they suggest that the definition of compensatory behaviors should be broadened conceptually to include compensation for any body image concern, since men and women seem to differ dramatically.

*Body shape.* Subjective perceptions of the ideal shapes that men hold for themselves have been assessed through objective figure-rating scales. A person may describe in words what they believe is their ideal body shape, but when they can point to a specific body configuration (size, shape, degree of muscularity) it is easier for others to understand their ideal body shape. Figure-rating scales include single-dimension scales on the basis of weight or body size (i.e. Thompson and Gray 1995), and dual-dimension scales varying both body fat and muscularity (Gruber, Pope, Borowiecki and Cohane 1999; Hildebrandt, Langenbucher, and Schlundt 2004). In single-dimension scales, participants typically choose the image that represents their current body, as well as the image to which they aspire, and a measure of body dissatisfaction between 'real' and 'ideal' is calculated. Several studies have reported that men wanted to gain size, but it is difficult to determine if the desired larger body is to be achieved via fat gain or muscle gain. In the dual-dimension scales, the distinction between weight and muscle is clarified. For example, one study found that participants were significantly dissatisfied with both muscularity and body fat; two-thirds of the participants wanted to lose weight, on average about 8 per cent of their weight, while one-third of participants wanted to gain weight, on average about 5 per cent of their weight (Cafri, Strauss and Thompson 2002). Body fat dissatisfaction was not significantly related to any characteristics of psychological functioning. However, the average amount of desired change in muscularity was fifteen pounds of additional muscle; those who had higher discrepancies in muscularity also had higher rates of depression, along with lower life satisfaction, and lower self-esteem. These findings corroborate other studies that suggest weight/body fat and muscularity are distinctly different dimensions for men. Tiggemann, Martins, and Churchett (2008), while not using figure-rating scales, have suggested that additional characteristics of men's bodies may be especially cogent to any discussion of body satisfaction, including height, head hair, body hair, and genital size, in addition to weight and muscularity. Among the 200 men in this study, all of these aspects were cause for concern, but body weight, height, and genital size were most worrisome. Therefore, the authors caution that a "narrow operationalization of body image" (2008: 1168) as defined by body size/shape and weight misses the complexity of living in one's body for men.

*Psychological/Social/Cultural Factors.* Psychological, social, and cultural factors are important to consider when examining men's body image because they demonstrate the complex nature between perceptions and psychological affect, as well as the forces that influence both. Psychological variables such

as negative feelings towards oneself, perfectionism, and low self-esteem were associated with poor body image. Perfectionism tendencies and a history of weight teasing were found to be related to low body satisfaction in men (Bardone-Cone, Cass and Ford 2008). Socially prescribed perfectionism, or the feeling that others hold high expectations of oneself, was found to be a moderator between body mass index (BMI) and body dissatisfaction among men, such that those who had lower levels of socially prescribed perfectionism combined with lower BMI tended to have greater body satisfaction. Another study found that, together, stronger socially prescribed perfectionism and internalization of societal messages about appearance predicted higher dissatisfaction with body fat, while internalization of messages alone predicted higher dissatisfaction with muscularity (Grammas and Schwartz 2009). Another psychological variable that has been considered with regard to body image is social physique anxiety (SPA). SPA refers to a specific type of anxiety felt when one is placed in a situation where others are likely to evaluate one's body (Hart, Leary, and Rejeski 1989). Some men experience strong SPA on a regular basis due to cultural expectations to look fit and muscular. Drive for muscularity, which is a typical component of masculine identity, was found to predict three components of body comparisons: general comparisons, weight comparisons, and muscle comparisons (McCreary and Saucier 2009). Drive for muscularity was found to be more predictive of muscle comparisons than of general or weight comparisons, but both muscle and weight comparisons were predictive of SPA. Those who more frequently compared their own bodies to others had higher SPA. However, it is not known if higher SPA exists among men who are more invested in appearance or who are generally more critical of their appearance; nor is it known what connections exist between specific appearance management behaviors in the realms of eating, exercise, and supplement use and SPA. Thus, further exploration is warranted of an individual's investment in muscle and weight components of their body image, as well as their evaluation of their muscularity and weight, in overall feelings of body dissatisfaction and social physique anxiety.

Socio-cultural factors such as peer pressure, sports participation, negative verbal commentary (teasing), and media influence have been connected to low body satisfaction. More frequent negative appearance-based verbal commentary (teasing) has been associated with higher body dissatisfaction, while more frequent positive commentary has been associated with higher satisfaction (Nowell and Ricciardelli 2008). Perceived media pressure to look muscular and attractive has been corroborated by several studies as contributing to greater body dissatisfaction among men (e.g. Agliata and Tantleff-Dunn 2004; Blond 2008; Fawcner and McMurray 2002; Jones 2004; Karazsia and Crowther, 2008; Leit, Gray, and Pope 2002). However, because men seem to be selective in what influence they accord media images of male bodies, or what comparisons they make between their own bodies and the bodies seen in media images, the exact influence of the media may be moderated by one's self-schema - that is to say, some men are more schematic on the variable of appearance than on other personal characteristics, and they may attend to appearance-related information more so than those who are less schematic on this variable (Fawcner and McMurray 2002).

A bio-psycho-social model of these connections has been suggested by Ricciardelli and McCabe (2004) to explain disordered behaviors and the pursuit of muscularity in young men. They suggest that

biological factors such as body mass index (BMI), psychological factors such as negative feelings and low self-esteem, and sociological/cultural factors such as pressure to look a certain way or participation in sports that emphasize leanness, combine to wreak havoc in young men. As young men move through adulthood, we can see evidence of their impact. For example, men with high BMIs were more prone to body dissatisfaction than those with average BMIs (Jones 2004; Jones and Crawford 2005; van den Berg et al, 2007); yet some men with high BMIs such as weight trainers were satisfied.

*Eating Disorders.* Pursuing an “ideal” body dictated by culture can lead to risky appearance management behaviors, such as eating disorders or obsessive exercise and weight training. Men with diagnosed eating disorders typically have great body dissatisfaction (e.g. Anderson 1990). Yet, body dissatisfaction has also been found among men with less severe eating behaviors as well as men who suffer from muscle dysmorphia, or pathological dissatisfaction with muscle mass (Pope, Olivardia, Gruber and Borowiecki 1999).

Little population-based data exists on the prevalence of eating disorders. Community-based studies reported that 10 per cent of reported eating disorder cases were men, with approximately 10 million females and 1 million males struggling with anorexia and bulimia (Andersen and Holman 1997). However, a study by Harvard University Medical School reported that up to 25 per cent of the estimated eight million Americans with eating disorders are male (Hudson, Hiripi, Pope and Kessler 2007). This was the first nationally representative study of eating disorders within the United States, where data were collected through face-to-face household surveys (N = 9,282) in 2001-2003. There are several explanations for potentially lower prevalence rates among men, such as female gender-biased diagnostic language in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-IV-TR* (American Psychiatric Association 2000). Also, researchers could be using body image constructs specific to women. Men think about their bodies differently than women, often striving to be lean but also muscular. None of the current DSM diagnostic criteria for eating disorders capture or assess this drive for muscularity. When men are dissatisfied with their bodies they also talk about the issues in a different way, if at all. Due to a pervasive thought that eating disorders are primarily a women’s issue within Western culture, men who struggle with body image issues may feel shame and question their masculinity, or believe that their eating behaviors are healthy. This feeling of gender role conflict alone may create greater body dissatisfaction and unhealthy eating/exercise behaviors (Berger, Levant, McMillan, Kelleher and Sellers 2005; Strong and Singh 2000; Strong, Williamson, Netemeyer and Geer 2000). Furthermore, men with higher levels of gender role conflict typically are less likely to seek psychological assistance (Berger, et al, 2005; Good and Wood 1995; Strong and Singh 2000; Wisch, Mahalik, Hayes and Nutt 1995).

### ***Masculinity***

*Social Construction of Gender and the Masculine Body.* Individuals evaluate themselves through comparison with others within society (Festinger 1954). Individuals actively construct gender roles through social transactions with family, peers, and the media (Courtenay 2000). There may be periods of time through-

out life, as in adolescence, where people compare themselves more to others within their peer group. In times or situations that are unclear, people are more likely to compare themselves to others for appropriate dress, manners, and body size. Perceptions of the physical self are then integrated into the overall self-concept, contingent on socio-cultural cues and messages. When men believe that they fail to meet certain social standards, they may begin to question their manhood. Simply admitting to feelings of anxiety about not fitting into perceived masculine norms may constitute a challenge to a person's manhood, but not expressing such anxiety could lead to greater drive for greater muscularity to meet perceived masculine body size norms. Gender-threatening feedback arouses stronger feelings of anxiety, threat, and shame in men than in women (Vandello, Bosson, Cohen, Burnaford and Weaver 2008). This could be what causes greater anxiety for men than women when they receive gender-threatening feedback. Some researchers believe that anxieties caused by feelings of gender role conformity are due to the precarious state of manhood within society (Gray and Ginsberg 2007; Vandello et al, 2008). Men ascribing to more traditional masculine ideals have reported greater drive for muscularity (McCreary, Saucier, and Courtenay, 2005). Furthermore, men reporting greater gender role conflict also report a greater drive for muscularity. Conflict around societal expectations related to success, power, and feelings of competitiveness have been correlated with this conflict (McCreary et al. 2005). Men develop complex ways to negotiate perceived societal expectations, such as adjusting their perceptions about body size ideals, or rejecting them altogether, as they negotiate the body relationship with their masculine identity (Wienke 1998). The strategy utilized may be dependent on how committed an individual is to the perceived body size norm in fashion at the moment and whether the individual can modify his behavior to achieve the perceived norm (Tiggemann, Martins, and Churchett, 2008; Wienke, 1998).

*Muscularity.* The muscular body ideal serves as a 'privileged' body, one that gains respect and earns social privilege. Individuals, both male and female, who closely resemble perceived cultural standards of beauty receive advantages and opportunities not readily open to others. Men with a muscular body perceive that there are social benefits that enable them to intimidate others, to be accorded power, and to conform to societal norms (Morrison, Morrison, and Hopkins 2003). Men with increased muscularity are seen as attractive, more dominant, and volatile as well as being less committed to their sexual partners. Muscular men have reported having more sex than less muscular men (Frederick and Haselton 2007).

While all body parts were reported as moderately important to self-perceptions of physical attractiveness, muscularity appeared to be the most important aspect for attractiveness (Ridgeway and Tylka 2005; Tiggemann et al, 2008). Furthermore, men believed that other men had ideal images that were less thin and more muscular, which can contribute to unhealthy eating and exercise behavior to meet the perceived norm. During the current time period of dynamic changes in gender roles and symbolism, uncertainty is created for many individuals. To address discomfort during such periods of rapid social change, people will often revert to perceived idealized norms of masculinity and femininity regardless of the relative fit with their daily lives. These idealized or fashionable images are socially constructed. Print and digital media create the misperception that the cultural ideals for body shape for women are very

slender and athletic, yet for men are V-shaped and muscular (Freson and Arthur 2008; Luciano 2007; Rosen and Gross 1987). Weight loss messages are the most prevalent across all magazines; however, in men's magazines weight gain content is more prevalent than weight loss content (Grieve and Bonneau-Kaya 2007). Men who have viewed muscular male images taken from magazines report greater body dissatisfaction, social physique anxiety, and drive for muscularity (Baird and Grieve 2006; Cafri, van den Berg and Thompson 2006; Duggan and McCreary 2004; Hatoum and Belle 2004; Leit, Gray and Pope Jr. 2002; Lorenzen, Grieve and Thomas 2004; Morrison et al, 2003; Morry and Staska 2001).

Men who believe that they do not meet this muscular ideal may feel unattractive and/or unmasculine. Misperceptions about what is attractive to the opposite sex are highly correlated with participating in unhealthy behaviors to meet the inaccurate perceptions. Greater discrepancy between men's perceived ideal body size and their actual muscularity are correlated with drive for muscularity, steroid use and other symptoms associated with a condition termed muscle dysmorphia, referring to an unrealistic appraisal of one's muscularity and motivation to build muscle (Pope Jr. et al, 2000). Men have reported thinking that the ideal male body size was more muscular than their actual size (Grieve, Newton, Kelley, Miller and Kerr 2005; Olivardia, Pope Jr., Borowiecki and Cohane 2004). Men also thought that women would find a more muscular body attractive than what women actually reported (Fallon and Rozin 1985).

Early studies around media influence on body image issues focused on the 'objectified women,' examining the interconnectedness between body size and appearance; body dissatisfaction, drive for thinness; and body image disturbance (Fredrickson and Roberts 1997; Fredrickson, Roberts, Noll, Quinn and Twenge 1998). Recent research also reported that men experiencing greater feelings of objectification have greater body dissatisfaction (Grieve and Helmick 2008). Individuals who internalize the media's social programming of a narrow definition of ideal bodies are more likely to participate in unhealthy eating and exercise behaviors. The difference is in what men and women do with those feelings associated with objectification. Women exhibit behaviors that are associated with losing weight while men exhibit behaviors associated with gaining muscle mass. Underweight women are more likely than underweight men to perceive themselves as attractive and healthy (McCreary and Sadava 2001). Men reporting higher scores of self-objectification are more likely to experience a greater drive for muscularity and symptoms associated with muscle dysmorphia (Grieve and Helmick 2008).

*Masculinity, Muscularity, and Power.* Many men, like women, who struggle with body image issues state that they feel a lack of control or power in their lives. This psychological factor can translate into body image issues as individuals choose to control their bodies through food and exercise, thus altering the body to fit perceived ideal or fashionable body types dictated by society. Individuals may lose weight or increase size and muscularity, and in doing so impact and/or control others either overtly or covertly through perceived power. Body size and muscularity have been equated with strength, power, respect, threat, and attractiveness (Frederick and Haselton 2007; Katz 2003). Since over 90 per cent of communication comes from non-verbal cues, the body itself plays a significant role in social transactions and, through increased muscularity, conveys power over others (Guffy 1994). For men, communication is often used to develop autonomy and hierarchy (Michaud and Warner 1997). Power is a central compo-



ment of hegemonic masculinity which is socially constructed (Connell 2005). The common element of strength in this concept includes physical, intellectual, and character strength. The human body is related to power and domination in Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity, such that muscular bodies become identities that are deemed worthy, and by extension, powerful (Moller 2007).

### ***Sexual and Racial Minorities***

Most of the research cited above was conducted with samples of men who were comparable in ethnicity and sexual orientation; they were typically white and, if sexual orientation was assessed, heterosexual. The vast majority of this research also used quantitative methods. Therefore, we now discuss research on minority men.

Research on body image among ethnic minority men is in its infant stages. Of eight articles reviewed, survey methods were used by all and sample size varied from twenty-eight to 1837. Only two articles examined a non-college population. Six of the eight articles examined Asian or Asian-American populations; two examined black or African-American populations; one examined Hispanic or Latin populations; one examined Pacific Islanders, and none examined Native American, Native Alaskan, or Native Hawaiian. Body image measures included measures of weight, physical appearance, appearance evaluation, appearance orientation, and appearance surveillance.

Findings indicate that black men have greater investment in and greater satisfaction with their appearance than white men (Smith, Thompson, Raczynski and Hilner 1999); white men have greater satisfaction than Hispanic men (Frederick, Forbes, Grigorian and Jarcho 2007). Asian men are farther from their ideal bodies than white men (Barnett, Keel and Conoscenti 2001). While white men felt they were close to their ideal, Asian men felt they were smaller than their ideal, indicating a desire for more musculature or bulk. However, other data suggest no differences between white and Asian-American men on variables of body satisfaction, ideal/current weights and weight/appearance concerns (Mintz and Kashubeck 1999). This difference may be due to sample size and instrumentation used. Whereas both studies used survey methods and a sample of college students, Barnett et al. had a sample that was four times that of Mintz and Kashubeck, and also used figure rating scales to position one's current and ideal body size, whereas Mintz and Kashubeck did not. Lastly, the research also indicated that regardless of the racial categories examined (e.g. Asian, African-American, Caucasian, and Hispanic) all men want to have greater muscularity (Altabe 1998). Thus, based on the limited studies that examine racial minorities the relationship between male gender and race appears to play a role in body satisfaction.

Research on male sexual minorities (i.e. gay) has been more prolific than research on racial minorities, with most articles assessing body satisfaction differences between gay and straight samples. One article in our search was a meta-analysis of 20 published studies (Morrison, Morrison, and Sager, 2004) and it concluded that there was a small, but statistically significant, difference between gay and straight men's body satisfaction; gay men are more dissatisfied than straight men.

Articles not included in this meta-analysis assess other dimensions of body image among gay men,

including body distress, general body image, and body esteem. Samples ranging from 47 to 357 gay men came from community and/or university populations. Samples were mostly white. Survey methods were used and instrumentation included figure rating scales, and measures of body image ideals, body esteem, masculinity norms, and internalized homophobia. Gay men have a stronger drive for muscularity than straight men (Yelland and Tiggemann 2003), and gay men have smaller actual torso size than straight men, yet both strive for the same size chest (Boroughs and Thompson 2002), indicating that gay men are farther from their ideal.

This difference may be explained by the phenomenon of internalized homophobia. Internalized homophobia is a gay person's acceptance of intolerant social attitudes directed towards gay people, or a form of self-hate. Emerging research has demonstrated a link between body image and internalized homophobia (Kimmel and Mahalik 2005; Reilly and Rudd 2006), who found that internalized homophobia is associated with body image dissatisfaction and masculine body ideals stress. Attitudes towards one's own sexual orientation predicted appearance evaluation and appearance satisfaction, such that a poorer opinion of one's sexual orientation predicts poorer evaluation and satisfaction; and, attitudes towards others' sexual orientation predicts bulimic behaviors, indicating stereotypical perceptions about the gay population in general. Additional research by Reilly, Yancura and Young (2012) found that the social physique anxiety among gay men was predicted by internalized homophobia and drive for muscularity. In addition they found that identifying as a 'bottom' or recipient in a sexual relationship predicted social physique anxiety. Perhaps the status of being a sexual minority, and experiencing pejorative social and psychological forces, influences gay men to strive to create a muscular physique in order to negate the gay male stereotype. In fact, Drummond (2005) argues that we should begin re-conceptualizing the body image experiences of gay men as related to physical aesthetics as well as the socio-cultural context within which the body is situated.

### ***Conclusion***

This review of the research on men's body image indicates that men have different views of and reactions to their bodies in relation to the socio-cultural ideal of the male body, definitions of masculine identity as they relate to the body, and due to gender role, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. There are many mediating variables that also affect body image, such as the media, perceptions of power, social groups, teasing, and anxiety. A complex picture of how men relate to their bodies is emerging, with opportunities for future research.

The socio-cultural ideal of the male body is becoming just as prescribed as that for the female body. In the last few years there have been greater numbers of images in advertising and popular media that define the male body as muscular and that equate muscularity with masculinity. Gender-coded appearance may play a significant role in increased prevalence of body dissatisfaction, body image issues, and eating or exercise disorders in the male population. Issues around power and control have been reported for women struggling with anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa. Consequently, it is now im-

portant to examine how power and ascribing to certain perceived masculine roles could affect the prevalence rates for unhealthy behaviors such as anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and muscle dysmorphia in the male population. Muscularity plays a significant role in the social structure of male identity as it relates to dominance and social control. As men feel more unclear about their role in society, they may gravitate toward gender stereotypes which could ultimately drive unhealthy behaviors.

In this review of nearly a hundred articles and books on men and body image, most of the research focused on young white men and most used quantitative methods. The research on the impact of ethnicity and racial identity begs further elaboration through both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. What we can conclude is that, regardless of ethnicity, there is a yearning to enhance muscularity and tone, indicating that a muscular physique is a more salient component of gender than ethnicity. Future research should continue to study African-American, Asian, and Latino populations of men, but should also embark on research on Polynesian Islanders, Native Americans, Native Alaskans, and Native Hawaiians. Research should focus on triangulated studies that explore perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors within the cultural groups, and as they interface with the dominant white population.

The research on sexual minorities has more substance, but still leaves many gaps in knowledge. We do know why gay men have more issues with body dissatisfaction than straight men and research suggests that there is a link to internalized homophobia. However, the studies are mostly, but not entirely, conducted on college samples of men and lump gay and bisexual respondents together. Future research should strive to examine differences among them and use community based samples. Additionally, we have yet to learn how belonging to subcultural groups within the gay community influences body image and body satisfaction. Anecdotes and cultural studies tell us that subgroups such as 'twinks', 'gym queens', 'bears', and 'leather men' hold different ideal body types (e.g. Cole 2008), but we do not know, qualitatively speaking, how these ideal body types influence body image, body satisfaction, self-esteem, appearance orientation, appearance evaluation, and compensatory behaviors such as eating, exercise, or use of supplements.

This paper reviews recent research literature since the mid 1990s related to socio-cultural ideals of the male body issues related to masculine identity such as muscularity, and issues related to racial and sexual minority men. From this analysis, it becomes clear that there are many variables that need further study, especially in the context of a wide variety of subsets of men. This literature review is useful as a starting point for categorizing the research literature in the field of male body image, and linking it to healthy versus unhealthy feelings about the self and appearance management behaviors.

Men's body image is closely connected to men's health, in that the attitudes and perceptions related to the body can strongly influence appearance management behaviors. Body image is a complex construct comprised of perceptual, attitudinal, and behavioral components. If one's culture or social environment determines that a certain body size and shape is fashionable (i.e. thin and muscular), and media and peer groups reinforce this norm, then individuals will likely practice appearance management behaviors to try to achieve the norm. Controlling diet, using protein supplements or anabolic steroids, following a strict regimen of exercise and weight training, undergoing cosmetic procedures, and choosing prod-

ucts to create a public appearance are all means of approximating this fashionable ideal. All humans, male and female, engage in creating their public appearance. The tricky part to discern is which behaviors pass the test of reason and health in contributing to a strong body image, and therefore, a strong sense of self, versus those behaviors that are clearly risky to one's health and mental well-being.

Most research on the topic of men and body image has used quantitative methods, and has focused on Caucasian men - usually young adult, college age men. Education, class, age and the aging process should be addressed to understand changes in body image through the life span. As the issues are complex, it is important that future research examine both a wider sample of men, and utilize a variety of other methods, particularly qualitative methods such as focus group interviews and case studies, that might lead to deeper understanding of the issues at the nexus of fashion and health.

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