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Research Paper

P5

Media Hurts Feelings

Many people deal with the struggle of fitting into society’s standards of beauty. Those standards are usually broadcasted through different media outlets, such as social media, commercials, and televisions. These beauty standards that are shown all over different media platforms create a stigma in people’s view of themselves. These standards that society creates hurts the way people see themselves; this dissatisfaction can lead to extreme life threatening outcomes from decisions they have made to fit these nearly impossible standards.

Many men deal with the struggle of fitting into standards that society has morphed into every media outlet one has seen. Most have heard the sayings like, “Man up” or “Be a man.” These saying with the pressure to look strong, muscular, not to show emotions, and fit the “strong and silent” character (Lovejoy) hurts the way men see themselves. The standard of men needing to be silent and not to show emotions is damaging. It is expected if a man is uncomfortable with something, he should not speak up. This sort of thinking in society is very dangerous for men, due to the fact if they are uncomfortable that they should not be because “they are a man.” Another standard of beauty for men is to have an athletic body. “Men are now more body-conscious than ever. They are increasingly pursuing a toned and muscular physique, in the mode of actors such as Daniel Craig or Ryan Gosling” (Graham). Men are trying to look much like actors who undergo severe dietary plans, harsh workouts, and may even be digitally altered. An average person cannot easily achieve these body ideals with their normal everyday life. To achieve these standards, they must severely alter their life-style. Women also deal with standards that harm their psyche. The media which is mainly aimed at young females are constantly seeing excessively thin models and actresses that portrays an unachievable body (Grabe and Hyde). Women seeing such images and compare themselves to those on the magazine or to the actress on the television damages their self-confidence. This damaged self-confidence may lead to numerous decisions that can be damaging. Many women who are caught in the moment, forget that the majority of the images are digitally altered.

The images that are altered create body images that are nearly impossible to obtain on a healthy body. These impossible images are altered by Photoshop which everyone forgets exists when they look at a magazine. Nearly all images are photoshopped and look nothing like the women in the real world (Bromberg-Krawitz). With almost everywhere a woman looks they see another woman with an impossible body and does not have that body which seems so common, it hurts their self-image that they do not look like those photos. With everyone sharing photos online that they edit to look more like the women on those magazine covers they feel much pressure to resemble. On social media where the “like” button is prominent also creates another problem of placing a numeric value on how one looks (Klein 59). The “like” button being so prominent in one’s online life, it puts an unnecessary value on a person. This value being so important in a life of an online user, mainly the younger generation, can easily create a dissatisfaction with oneself of not hitting that certain number of “likes”. Teens usually understand what gets that certain number of “likes” by seeing how the media portrays their gender at their age. With that sense of what is appropriate to get that “like,” they construct their profile to fit that standard (Klein 59). For the online user to get that “like,” they construct their profile, ignoring the fact of self-expression, and trying to fit into the box that society has constructed. With that said, these unrealistic thin images of women, pressure women to feel that they do not fit this “norm.” Many women feel like they need to fit this “normal” body image and numerous women go to get cosmetic surgery done to fit their body ideal influenced greatly by the media. In the MP report from 2014 they said that the pressure to look good has increased cosmetic surgery rates by nearly 20% since 2008 (Roxby). With so many women feeling the pressure to look good, they act by going to get surgery to look like the attractive women online. With media becoming so involved with everyday life, people have felt the need to alter the way they look.

Another way women have altered the way they look is with waist trainers. Many women wish to have that tiny waist like the Kardashians, who promotes the use of waist trainers. The use of such things can lead to seriously damaging outcomes. Such outcomes from using the waist trainer can become life threatening. Waist trainers wrap around one’s stomach and tighten the area to give the hourglass look women are conditioned to look like. Doctors have stated repeatedly that waist trainers are dangerous due to the fact that they alter the shape of one’s spine and crushes the organs together (Ross). The fact is that people are feeling the need to squeeze their organs and reshape their spine to get this “attractive” hourglass look is dangerous for society. Many other side effects occur such as heart burn, worsening indigestion, and women passing out (Ross). With so many serious side effect women still decide to put their body through this kind of torture to fit this body ideal that the media has shoved into their face making them feel that it is an average beauty. With so many women willing to do this, society has created an industry feeding off women’s insecurity which repeats this cycle.

Other ways harmful society feeds women into feeling unattractive is a community built online. This community is known as thinspiration or fitspiration which feeds off people sharing ways to lose weight in healthy or in dangerous ways. Many of these social media accounts posts unhealthy thin people and many unhealthy ways to lose weight. Most people who follow these thinspiration accounts or fitspiration accounts create unhealthy habits and may even develop an eating disorder if one does not already have one. India Edmonds, age 17, developed an eating disorder after constantly comparing herself and when online to find a similar community. Which the thispiration community and eating disorder have caught up with causing her to nearly die (Hernando and Wilson). With being obsessed with losing weight and having a thigh gap or having a stomach smaller than a length of a pen, India Edmond nearly payed the price with her life. Miss Edmond is not the only one who has been effected like this.

Many men and women also have had a struggle much like India Edmonds. “One in ten people with anorexia are male. 17% of men are on extreme diets. 3% of men binge eat. 4% of men purge after eating. 3% of adolescent boys use perform-enhancing drugs” (Larsen). Due to media’s portrayal of men with nearly no body fat, most of society does not see that men also suffer from eating disorders. This sort of thinking keeps men quite as well as the idea that men are not bothered by anything. Many men also deal with body dysmorphic disorders. One of the body dysmorphic disorder is muscle dysmorphia (Larsen). Men are now compulsively working out to lower their fat content and take extreme dietary changes to reach their goals. Many young male feel the need to have a body fat content close to zero, with a protein rich diet with their calorie intake not as close to what they need can be very harmful. Another name for muscle dysmorphia is bigorexia. It is an anxiety disorder which makes a person to see themselves as small and fragile, despite being muscular and big (Ahmad, Rotherham, and Talwar). As a result of this disorder, many men and women are overworking themselves to extreme levels. They over exhaust themselves and create other hazardous situations by overexerting themselves.

Sadly men are not the only ones who deal this this. 16% of the transgender community on college campuses have reported of having an eating disorder (“Eating”). Many of the transgender community do not feel like they fit the standard of beauty that is broadcasted and force themselves to conform into such standards. These eating disorders are frightening and can seriously harm one’s body. “1.5% of American women suffer from bulimia nervosa in their lifetime” (“Eating”). Over 1.8 million women in the United States alone who suffer from bulimia nervosa. That many women suffering from this disorder with the 4% of men also purging as well shows a serious problem with the media’s portrayal. Roughly every hour at least one person dies from a result from an eating disorder (“Eating”). With a large amount of people dying on a daily basis, it is much more serious than people assume it to be. People are dying over the fact that they are not content with their bodies and attempt to correct it with unhealthy methods and are willing to pay the price for it.

The media is influencing the standard of beauty in society. This influence is harming the psychological view of one has of oneself. This stigma one creates can lead to serious consequences as simple as dissatisfaction which leads to cosmetic surgery or even death. With so many dissatisfied and constantly seeing other thinner or more muscular people can lead to people developing different disorders such as anorexia, bulimia nervosa, and muscle dysmorphia. Many people being effected negatively with the way media shows beauty, society should set regulations to create more diversity on every media platform.

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