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| **Introduction**  My research project is about if the amount of television that someone watches will affect their body image. To study this I surveyed 350 students asking them how much they weigh, how tall they are, how many hours of television they watch per week, and how they feel about their body. Psychologists have found that there is a direct correlation between the amount of media a person is exposed to and the way that they view their body. (In a negative or positive way)  **How is this Related to Biology?**  You might be wondering what body image and disordered thinking has to do with biology. Actually, it has a lot to do with it! In recent years, much research has indicated that there is genetic factors that contribute to disordered thinking. (Siegal 31) Children whose parents have suffered from an eating disorder are much more likely to have some sort of problem with body image or eating. Researchers believe that this is because people have genetic predisposition to disordered thinking. Also, People with eating disorders, are twice as likely to have variations in the gene for serotonin receptors, part of which helps determine the appetite. (Although not all people with poor body image have an eating disorder, all people with eating disorders have poor body image, and poor body image also helps lead to unhealthy eating habits or an eating disorder.) Often times those people have an overproduction of serotonin, which creates an overwhelming feeling of stress. Serotonin is a neurotransmitter, a group of chemical messengers that carry out communication in the brain and body. The messenger travels from one neuron to another, where they attach to a specific area called a receptor. This union, triggers signals that either allow or prevent a message from being passed on to other cells.(www.eating-disorders.net) Seretonin is a key element involved in hunger, sleep, depression and anxiety. High levels of seretonin cause such extreme anxiety that by not eating, a person feels a calming feeling, and a sense of control.  **Why was this topic chosen?**  This research topic was chosen because in the society that we live in today, people are constantly judging their self worth based on their appearance, and are being judged by the same criteria. I was curious if television actually does affect the way someone views their body. When turning on the television, at any hour of the day, at any channel, that question intrigued me more, as on every channel, there were extremely thin actors and actresses, people who do not look like the people I encounter in my daily life. Not only did I find the idea that the media could alter how we viewed ourselves, the thought that they had that power angered me. Our society places so much emphasis on superficial things like perfect figures that often times it can make people feel worthless because they are overweight, or do not fit into the cookie cutter mold cut out by society. Today, the average model weighs 23% below the national average. There are three billion women who don't look like supermodels, and only eight that do. Too often though, those realities are forgotten, and the images that Americans are constantly bombarded with become the measure of their self worth.  **Poor Body Image does not equal an Eating Disorder!**  Just because people have a poor body image does not mean that they have an eating disorder. But, Eating problems usually start out with the common wish to lose weight and maintain a certain body image. (Siege 7) That unhappiness with ones body often leads to disordered eating such as dieting, and sometimes develops into the extreme forms of unhealthy eating- Anorexia Nervosa or Bulimia Nervosa. Unfortunately, among teenagers the focus on body, dieting and weight is particularly acute. (Siegal 6)    ([Intro1](http://docs.google.com/introduction.html))([Intro2](http://docs.google.com/intro2.html))  [[Home](http://docs.google.com/home.html)][[Introduction](http://docs.google.com/introduction.html)][[Hypothesis](http://docs.google.com/hypothesis.html)][[Procedure](http://docs.google.com/procedure.html)][[Data](http://docs.google.com/data.html)][[Conclusions](http://docs.google.com/conclusions.html)][[Bilio/Links](http://docs.google.com/biblio.html)]  [[2002 Projects](http://docs.google.com/AP2002/index.html)][[2001 Projects](http://docs.google.com/index.html)][[2000 Projects](http://docs.google.com/AP2000/index.html)][[1999 Projects](http://docs.google.com/AP99/index.html)][[1998 Projects](http://docs.google.com/AP98/index.html)] |