

2008

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Villarreal, Priscilla, "Body image disturbance : cultural differences, how it develops, its impact, and clinical implications" (2008). *Graduate Research Papers*. 1655.

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Abstract

This paper is a review of literature written about women and body image. Body image is influenced by family, peers, media, and culture. Through these influences, women have learned thinness is the ideal body size. If a woman believes she does not fit a desired body shape, she can develop a negative body image. Body image disturbance can impact a woman's social life, romantic relationships, and her sexual functioning. This paper also describes interventions which could be utilized by counselors when working with clients who have a negative body image.

BODY IMAGE DISTURBANCE:
CULTURAL DIFFERENCES, HOW IT DEVELOPS, ITS IMPACT, AND CLINICAL
IMPLICATIONS

A Research Paper

Presented to

The Department of Educational Leadership, Counseling,
and Postsecondary Education
University of Northern Iowa

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by

Priscilla Villarreal

May 2008

This Research Paper by: Priscilla Villarreal

Entitled: BODY IMAGE DISTURBANCE: CULTURAL DIFFERENCES, HOW IT DEVELOPS, ITS IMPACT, AND CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS

has been approved as meeting the research paper requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

3-31-08
Date Approved

Darcie Davis

Adviser/Director of Research Paper

4.2.08
Date Received

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Abstract

This paper is a review of literature written about women and body image. Body image is influenced by family, peers, media, and culture. Through these influences, women have learned thinness is the ideal body size. If a woman believes she does not fit a desired body shape, she can develop a negative body image. Body image disturbance can impact a woman's social life, romantic relationships, and her sexual functioning. This paper also describes interventions which could be utilized by counselors when working with clients who have a negative body image.

Body Image Disturbance:

Cultural Differences, How it Develops, Its Impact, and Clinical Applications

Body image is a multifaceted concept which can impact the lives of many women. The ways in which body image develops for each woman varies. This paper aims to explain the influences on body image such as family, peers, media, and culture. Cultural differences between Caucasian American women and Hispanic American women's body image will also be addressed. In addition, this paper provides the ways in which body image disturbance can impact the life of women. Interventions for practitioners to utilize when working with women with body image disturbance will also be provided. However, many of the references in this paper are dated in the 1990's due to the fact that research on body image has declined.

Definition and Statistics

Grogan (1999) defines body image as "a person's perceptions, thoughts, and feelings about his or her body" (p. 1). Grogan also defines body dissatisfaction as "a person's negative thoughts and feelings about his or her body" (p. 2). Forty to seventy percent of women and adolescent girls express dissatisfaction with their body size or state they would like to lose weight (Contento, Basch, & Zybert, 2003). Forty to seventy percent of adolescent girls are dissatisfied with two or more characteristics of their body, usually in the middle or lower parts of their body such as stomach, buttocks, thighs, and hips (Levine & Smolak, 2002). In many developed countries, 50% to 80% of adolescent girls wish to be thinner and 20% to 60% self-reported some form of dieting (Levine & Smolak). Cash and Henry (1995) found 63% of adult American women were not satisfied with their weight and 49% reported to be anxious about their body weight. In

the same study of 800 American women, half of the women reported feeling negatively about their overall appearance (Cash & Henry).

Culture and Body Image

American Culture

Body image is developed in a cultural context with different countries placing values on different body shapes and sizes (Contento et al., 2003; Jackson, 2002). In a study conducted by Wildes et al. (as cited in Grabe & Hyde, 2006), White women in Western countries were found to have face greater body dissatisfaction than non-white women. Grogan (1999) suggested the American culture relates thinness with success, happiness, social acceptability, and power. Costin (1996) reported the American culture is a “thin-is-in” society and what a woman weighs is more important than who she is (p. 109). When a woman meets the standards of physical beauty as defined in the American culture, she is usually treated more positively (Jackson, 2002). Being overweight is associated with negative characteristics such as laziness, being unattractive, and lacking power (Grogan). In addition, anyone who is overweight may experience prejudice (Grogan).

Hispanic Culture

The research on Hispanic women and body image is scarce and inconsistent (Altabe & O’Garo, 2002; Contento et al., 2003). Hispanic women express weight and body image concerns similar to the rate of white females (Contento et al.). Mosavar-Rahmani, Peltó, Ferris, & Allen (as cited in Contento et al) found Latina women were similar to European women in that they report themselves to be more overweight than their actual body size and their ideal body image was for a thinner figure. One study

found Hispanic women did not convey body dissatisfaction until they were overweight (Cachelin, Monreal, & Juarez, 2006). Altabe and O'Gara claimed Hispanic women have increased their use of diuretics and laxatives to lose weight. On the other hand, Gil-Kashiwabara (as cited in Grabe and Hyde, 2006) reported that full bodied, large women are considered to be of high status and healthy in many Latin American cultures. A study of Hispanic women in Philadelphia found the strive for thinness was valued for young women, but when they married and became mothers, a bigger body size was valued because it indicated their husbands took care of them (Masara, 1997 as cited in Contento et al). The degree of acculturation can also play a role in the body image of Hispanic women. Lopez, Blix, and Blix (1995) conducted a study of 135 Latinas and 32 non-Latina women and found non-Latina white women, Latinas born in the United States, and Latinas who immigrated to the U.S. all reported thinness as the ideal body shape. They also found the age of immigration for Latina women impacted their body image with women who immigrated at the age of 17 years or older choosing a larger ideal body size (Lopez et al., 1995). They claim if Latina girls acculturate into the American culture during early adolescence, they are more likely to develop eating disorders (Lopez, et al.). The evidence of Hispanic women adopting the thin ideal body image comes from an increase of eating disorders among the Hispanic population (Altabe and O'Gara). Cachelin et al. (2006) studied 276 Hispanic women and found the degree of acculturation impacted their body image. Hispanic women with a greater degree of acculturation preferred a thinner body size and Hispanic women who were less acculturated reported being more tolerant of larger figures (Cachelin, et al.).

Family and Body Image

Parents' Influence from Birth

The family is the first source of children's body image through instruction, modeling, and feedback (Kearney-Cooke, 2002; Nelms, 2007). Body image can be influenced from the moment a baby is conceived (Nelms). Body image begins from parents' preconceived images of what sex they would prefer the baby to be and how they would like their baby to look (Fisher, Fisher, & Stark as cited in Kearney-Cooke). If parents feel their baby's appearance matches their ideal image, the baby's emotional needs will be met, which can provide a secure basis for his or her body image (Costin, 1996; Kearney-Cooke). Parents' expectations for their child's body image continue throughout their child's life through comments, attitudes, and behaviors towards their child's appearance (Kearney-Cooke; McCabe, Ricciardelli, & Ridge, 2006; Nelms). If a parent teases their child about weight and body image during early childhood, it can have a serious impact on the child's body image later in life (Fabian & Thompson as cited in Hesse-Biber, 2007). Parents can also impact a child's body image by degrading or praising certain physical attributes because it sends the message that a positive physical appearance is related to love and acceptance (Kearney-Cooke).

Family Environment

Body image can also be affected by family functioning (Bennighoven, Tetsch, Kunzendorf, & Jantschek, 2007) as well as family criticism and environment (Green & Pritchard, 2003). Bennighoven et al. (2007) studied 49 women with eating disorders and their mothers and found a chaotic, negative environment within the family and a decreased amount of expressiveness and cohesion have been recognized as families with

daughters who may have negative body images. He also found a controlling family environment with negative communication styles, along with discrepancies on norms and values, might increase the development of body image-related issues (Bennighoven et al.). Family members who are criticized by other family members about weight or body shape are more likely to experience body dissatisfaction (Green & Pritchard). Green and Pritchard found that if a family pressures an individual to lose weight, she is more likely to have a poor body image.

A Father's Influence

During adolescence, daughters may turn to their fathers for attention and seek approval from their fathers for their physical appearance (Kearney-Cooke, 2002; Keery, Boutelle, van den Berg, & Thompson, 2005). A father's response to his daughter's maturing body can play an important role in developing her feelings about her body and becoming a woman (Kearney-Cooke). Fathers also serve as models of male interaction and their negative comments about body image may send a message to their daughters that men only approve of a thin woman (Keery et al., 2005). Kearny-Cooke stated:

The father's views on the "ideal" body for women, his attitudes toward women's bodies, his reactions to his daughter's changing body, and his comments about her maturity have an impact on her body schema and are likely to influence her body image development in either positive or negative ways (p. 103).

In a study of 50 female adolescents and their fathers, Dixon, Gill, and Adair (2003) found fathers who strongly believe in the importance of physical attractiveness and control of food intake by women, were more likely to have daughters who have negative body image and daughters who may engage in unhealthy eating behaviors. They found 68% of the fathers made the following statement towards their daughters, "Slim girls get more dates" (Dixon et al., 2003, p. 45). In their study Dixon et al. found 60% of the

fathers studied agreed thinner girls are more attractive, 86% believed it is important for women to look good, and 80% believed women need to watch what they eat. They also found 82% of those fathers reported if their daughters were overweight, they would actively encourage them to lose weight (Dixon et al.). Dixon et al. concluded fathers pass these beliefs on to their daughters, which causes their daughters to internalize them. In another study of 372 female adolescents, Keery et al. found girls were more affected by teasing and negative comments about weight from their fathers than from their mothers. They stated the teasing leads to higher levels of body dissatisfaction, unhealthy eating behaviors, and low self esteem (Keery et al.).

A Mother's Influence

Kearney-Cooke (2002) claimed today's generation of young women are the first to be raised by mothers who usually disapprove of their own bodies and are worried about the size of their daughter's bodies from the moment their daughters are born. A mother is the primary role model for women's attitudes toward body weight and shape and dieting (Bennighoven et al., 2007; Contento et al., 2003; McCabe et al., 2006). Schilder (as cited in Kearney-Cooke) stated, the interaction between child and mother affects the child's body image because the child identifies with the parent's body image as part of her own body image. Lowes and Tiggemann, (2003) found body dissatisfaction for girls ages 6-8 was predicted by awareness of their mother's body dissatisfaction. According to Chernin, (as cited in Cash, 2002) daughters attempt to retain connectedness with their mother and typically adopt their mother's values and lifestyle as they get older. When a mother teases her daughter about her weight it has been found to be predictive of her daughter's body image disturbance (Benninghoven et

al.; Keery et al., 2005). It has also been found a mother's comments seems to the most powerful impact on daughters weight loss attempts, body esteem, and concerns about weight gain (Smolak, 2002). Numerous authors reported body dissatisfaction can be influenced by perceived pressure from mothers to lose weight by requiring them to avoid or eat certain foods (McCabe at al.; Keery et al.; Smolak).

The Development of Body Image during Adolescence

Pre-Adolescence

Studies have found children as young as 6 years old are aware of a thinner body ideal (Dohnt & Tiggemann, 2006; Lowes & Tiggemann, 2003; Smolak, 2002) and the dieting behaviors to attain a thinner body type (Dohnt & Tiggemann). Dohnt and Tiggemann conducted a study of 128 girls ages 5 to 8 and found 43% of the sample reported they would use some type of dietary restraint if they gained weight. They also concluded by 6 years old, girls can absorb societal beliefs of thinness as the ideal body shape (Donht & Tiggemann). Also, children by the age of 6, and maybe earlier, are aware of the bias against people who are bigger in body size, and may express this bias themselves (Smolak). Children who are overweight internalize these messages and develop body dissatisfaction (Smolak). Jackson (2002) claims attractive children experience more positive interactions and are given more attention and care giving than children who are seen as less attractive. However, Jackson also reported there are limited studies on the treatment of attractive versus unattractive children. Dohnt and Tiggeman found media, parents, and peers as influences for children's body image. According to Dohnt and Tiggemann girls' body image is impacted most by watching music videos and

looking at ads and models in women's magazines. The reasons for their impact are described later in this paper.

Adolescence

Studies have demonstrated that satisfaction with overall appearance and body parts declines considerably over the ages of 12 to 15 (Bearman, Presnell, Martinez, & Stice, 2006; Levine & Smolak, 2002). During early adolescence, girls are faced with many developmental challenges, such as pubertal development, identity formation, emerging sexuality, and gender role growth (Bearman et al., 2006; Levine & Smolak). Also, the drive for thinness is exacerbated during adolescence because some girls become interested in forming relationships with the opposite sex (Markey & Markey, 2006). Studies have also indicated influences from same-sex peers have a significant impact on the body esteem of adolescent girls (Jones, Vigfusdottir, & Lee, 2004).

During adolescence, conversations between friends are especially influential because adolescent girls experience increased intimacy in their friendships (Berndt & Keefe, 1995 as cited in Jones et al., 2004). Also, when adolescent females engage in conversations about appearance, it reinforces the importance and value of appearance and it begins the development of body ideals (Jones, et al.). Levine and Smolak (2002) report adolescent girls partake in "fat talk," which is described as girls sharing their anxieties about becoming or being "fat" (p.81). From their study, Jones et al. concluded frequent conversations with friends about appearance were connected to greater feelings of disappointment with one's body. McCabe et al. (2006) found adolescent girls tend to negatively compare themselves to their female friends in relation to weight and attractiveness. In addition, peer criticism of appearance can also lead to body

dissatisfaction (Jones et al.). Women who are teased during their adolescent years are more likely to develop negative body image than women who were not teased (Weller & Dziegielewski, 2004). Peer criticism of appearance contributes to the internalization of important features of appearance, which leads adolescents to criticize their own body and appearance (Jones et al.). Most of the messages adolescent girls receive about their body image focuses on appearance, which influences them to take part in dieting behaviors (McCabe et al.). In McCabe et al. study, half of their sample of 40 adolescent girls reported they received negative comments from their friends with weight being the common theme.

Media and Body Image

Barbie

The way children relate to their own bodies and the bodies of others can be influenced by body representation in popular media (Norton, Olds, Olive, & Dank, 1996). According to Wilkinson (as cited in Norton et al., 1996) children can view these representations of body image as what is expected of them in their adult life. Dolls can provide a concrete body image which girls can internalize as they are beginning to develop their own body image and self concept (Dittmar, Halliwell, & Ive, 2006). Smolak (2002) made the following statement about Barbie, “Barbie, a doll owned by about 90% of girls ages 3-11: Fewer than 1 in 100,000 women are likely to have proportions similar to Barbie’s” (p. 71). The perfect body shape presented to girls through Barbie includes unbelievably long legs, embellished breasts, nonexistent hips, and an extremely tiny waist (Hesse-Biber, 2007). Derenne and Beresin (2006) reported it is physiologically impossible to achieve the measurements of Barbie. If Barbie were to

be a real woman, she would be 39% thinner than an anorexic patient and because of her body weight, and she would not be able to menstruate (Rintala & Mustajoki, 1992).

According to Smolak, the primary way to “play” with Barbie is to change her outfits, which focuses on the importance of appearance and “looking good” (p.71). Girls also play with Barbie in a fantasy and imaginary way and learn about beauty and perfection by pretending to be Barbie, which causes them to believe they must be thin to be beautiful (Dittmar et al., 2006). Dittmar et al. studied 162 girls from age 5 to 8 to determine if exposure to Barbie had an impact on girls’ body image. They found Barbie dolls caused an increase in body dissatisfaction for girls (Dittmar et al.).

Magazines

Magazines are another source girls and women use to gather information about popular culture such as fashion, beauty tips, health issues, and dieting (Malkin, Wornian, & Chrisler, 1999; Smolak, 2002). Girls may start reading teen magazines by late elementary school which portray body shape ideals and also address appearance related concerns (Smolak). Guillen and Barr (as cited in Grogan, 1999) claims *Seventeen*, a popular teen magazine, contributes to the current environment in which thinness is expected of adult and adolescent women. About half of late elementary school girls read teen magazines occasionally, with 25% reading them at least twice a week (Smolak). Dohnt and Tiggemann found girls who read teen magazines had more knowledge of dieting options and reported greater dissatisfaction with their appearance than girls who watched more television. Jones, Vigfusdottir, and Lee (2004) found magazines provided girls with more appearance-related topics to discuss with their peers, which eventually becomes the focus of most of their conversations. Malkin et al. (1999) found magazine

covers of 69 women's magazines and found 54 out of 69 of the magazine covers contained some type of appearance or body concern. Ninety-four percent of the magazine covers, which Malkin et al. studied, displayed a young thin model or celebrity who wore revealing clothing. Malkin et al. also stated women's magazines are more apt to display messages regarding dieting, exercise, and cosmetic surgery to modify their bodies which may cause women to believe having a certain body shape leads to living a happier life, stronger friendships, and better romantic relationships (Malkin et al.).

How Media Influences Body Image

In today's American culture, the media has a more profound presence than ever before (Derenne & Beresin, 2006). Media images have been recognized as powerful forces which establish the appearance standards expected for women (Tiggeman, 2002). When a woman compares her body with an image she views through some form of media, she may find herself wanting a body different than her own (Tiggemann). When women continually expose themselves to such images, they may begin to internalize the images and make them a point of reference with which they judge themselves (Tiggemann). Body dissatisfaction can also cause women to participate in unhealthy dieting behaviors which may lead to eating disorders and depression (Dereene & Beresin; Holstrom, 2004). Through the media, numerous and new dieting and exercise tips are offered leading women to believe they are not thin or pretty enough by offering (Derenne & Beresin; Tiggeman). The media also provides definitions of what it is to be an ideal woman in today's society (Grogan, 1999). Sometimes these messages include having a successful career, raising a family, and maintaining a social life while fulfilling the pressure to be thin (Derenne & Beresin; Grogan).

Sexual and Physical Abuse Influences on Body Image

Sexual Abuse

Childhood sexual abuse can lead to feelings of disgrace toward one's body, (Fallon & Ackard, 2002; Kearney-Cooke & Striegel-Moore, 1994) and unhealthy feelings about one's body can lead to dangerous eating behaviors and dieting (Logio, 2003). Dansky, Brewerton, Kilpatrick, and O'Neil (1997) also concluded a woman who has suffered from sexual abuse may feel repulsion toward her body which can merge with anxiety about body weight, size, and shape. Therefore, when a woman has been sexually abused, body dissatisfaction can serve as the link between eating disorders and sexual abuse (Preti, Incani, Camboni, Petretto, & Masala, 2006). Body dissatisfaction can also be influenced by sexual abuse since sexual abuse can induce poor self esteem and feelings of depression (Smolak & Murnen, 2003). In order to improve self esteem, some women may attempt to lose weight to improve their appearance (Ferrier, Martens, & Cimini, 2005). Logio studied 309, ninth and eleventh grade girls and boys to determine the relationship between childhood abuse and body dissatisfaction. She also found 39% of the students who reported one type of abuse and 43% of students who reported past sexual and physical abuse had the tendency to self-evaluate as overweight despite their actual body size (Logio). Ferrier et al. (2005) found 36% of their sample who also reported past abuse, believed they were overweight. Their sample included 463 female undergraduate students (Ferrier et al.). Fallon & Ackard claimed that women who were sexually abused might view their body as disgusting, huge, or ugly because it reflects how they perceive the sexual abuse - ugly and disgusting.

Physical Abuse

Women who are in abusive relationships may believe their partners are not happy with them, which causes them to believe they need to improve their bodies by losing weight in order to make their partners love them (Ferrier, Martens, & Cimini, 2005). “Assault can frequently result in the so-called everyday trance state, when dissociative mechanisms like detachment from body are used to ease the trauma, and this can later result in rejecting the patient’s own body, problems with representation of body and body image distortions (Treuer, Koperdak, Rozsa, and Furedi, 2005, p. 110). When a woman has been abused, she may feel powerless and angry towards her body, leading her to unhealthy eating behaviors as a way to cope (Ferrier et al., 2005). Treuer et al. (2005) sampled 63 patients diagnosed with eating disorders and found women who had been physically abused reported more severe distortions regarding their body image. From their results, Treuer et al. (2005) concluded that childhood physical abuse plays a significant part in the development of a distorted body image.

Social Life and Relationships

Romantic Partners

When a woman has a negative body image of herself, it can impact romantic relationships (Ambwani & Strauss, 2007; Markey & Markey, 2006; Weideman, 2002). Also, body image can be influenced by romantic partners (Ambwani & Strauss; Weller and Dziegielewski, 2004). Women are taught their bodies are assets which will allow or deny them access to goods on which society places high value, including romantic relationships (Ambwani & Strauss). However, when a woman is involved in a romantic relationship, she could still experience negative body image (Markey & Markey, 2006).

Markey and Markey studied 95 heterosexual couples and the relationship between women's body image and their romantic relationships. They found women tended to be dissatisfied with their bodies because they believed they were heavier than their partners perceived them to be (Markey & Markey). Markey and Markey also found women wished to be thinner than their partners wanted them to be. Women with negative body image experience low self confidence and can become insecure in their romantic relationships (Ambwani & Strauss). Markey and Markey concluded the longer women are in their relationships they project their own ideal body onto their partners or they assume their partners share the same ideal. Ambwani and Strauss conducted a study of 113 undergraduate women and 107 undergraduate men and found that "women, body shape and weight concerns leads to questioning their partners' fidelity; they may selectively attend to "evidence" of cheating, such as flirting behavior, thus fueling the experience of jealousy and eroding trust" (p. 19). Women with negative body image can become more self-protective and cautious in emotional intimacy (Cash, Theriault, & Annis, 2004). Also, if a woman has excessive investment in her appearance for self-definition, it may intensify her insecurity and anxiety in her romantic relationships (Cash et al., 2004).

Women's romantic partners can either influence body image in a negative or positive manner (Ambwani & Strauss, 2007). Weller and Dziegielewski (2004) found women who reported obtaining support from their romantic partners were likely to experience less anxiety and greater satisfaction with general physical appearance and specific body parts. Women believe their success with their romantic relationships is dependent on their physical attractiveness (Cash et al., 2004). Weller and Dziegielewski

found that influences and negative comments by a romantic partner can be predictive of body image disturbance.

Sexual Relations

Body image concerns can be particularly disturbing for women during sexual activity, since there can be a great amount of focus on the body (Weaver & Byers, 2006). In a study conducted by Weiderman (2000) he found 36% of the 227 women in his study expressed concern towards body appearance while engaging in sexually intimate behaviors with their partners. Women with increased body satisfaction, have more recurrent sexual experiences, engage in a broad range of sexual activities, feel more sexually attractive, and report less sexual problems than women with negative body image (Weaver & Byers). Weiderman reported when women are more concerned with their body image during sexual intimacy, they experience greater sexual anxiety and avoidance, fewer heterosexual experiences, and lower sexual self-esteem and assertiveness. Many women feel pressured to maintain their figure and to be slender in order to preserve their sexual relationship (Charles and Kerr 1986 as cited in Grogan, 1999). Concern about physical attractiveness can serve as the focus that inhibits sexual arousal and sexual satisfaction (Weiderman, 2002). When women feel better about their body, sexual desire can increase (Weiderman, 2000, 2002).

Social Interaction

A woman's social life and social interaction can be affected if she is dissatisfied with her body (Cash, Theriault, and Annis, 2004; Liechty, Freeman, & Zabriske, 2006). Cash and Fleming (2002) claimed the human body is a "social object," which can identify a person within her social world (p. 277). Cash et al. (2004) found that for

women, a negative body image involved concerns and greater discomfort about acceptance and approval in social interactions. Liechty et al. (2006) studied 116 female students and 76 of their mothers and how body dissatisfaction affected their social life. They found 45% of the women chose not to participate in some leisure activities because of concern over their physical appearance (Liechty et al.). They also reported 60% of the women only participated in leisure activities that contributed to weight loss despite their lack of enjoyment in the activities. Women's confidence in social interactions can be associated with their value of attractiveness (Ambawani & Strauss, 2007). However, regardless of women's physical characteristics, their own feelings, beliefs, and perceptions about their appearance may determine how they believe others view them (Cash & Fleming). The subjective interpretation of body image affects how women emotionally and cognitively experience their social interaction (Cash & Fleming).

Cognitive Behavioral Treatment of Body Image Disturbance

Cognitive-behavioral interventions are the most practiced techniques to treat body image disturbance (Cash & Strachan, 2002; Farrell, Shafran, & Lee, 2006). Cognitive-behavioral techniques used to treat body image disturbance include: cognitive restructuring, size perception training, and behavioral experiments (Farrell et al., 2006). One of the most widely used workbooks is Cash's *The Body Image Workbook: An 8-Step Program for Learning to Like Your Looks* which is based on cognitive-behavioral interventions (Cash & Strachan). Cash and Strachan reported the workbook can be self-administered or used by clinicians to provide body image treatment.

The following is a brief description of Cash's 8-step program for treating body image disturbance. For step one clients are required to set specific goals based on their

assessment profile (Cash, 1997; Cash & Strachan, 2002). Their profile is developed from the measurements provided in the workbook (Cash & Strachan). In step 2, clients describe how past events and personal development impact the development of negative body image (Cash; Cash & Strachan). For this step clients are asked to keep a “Body Image Diary” to report their body image experiences and how their experiences impact their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors (Cash & Strachan, p. 483). Step three teaches relaxation techniques and positive self talk (Cash; Cash & Strachan). Step four teaches clients to recognize assumptions related to their appearance and how to dispute the assumptions (Cash; Cash and Strachan). Cash (1997) and Cash and Strachan (2002) stated step 5 of the workbook teaches clients how to identify cognitive distortions regarding their body and teaches ways to change or modify the distortions. Step 6 teaches clients particular behavioral strategies to replace their avoidant behaviors pertaining to body image (Cash; Cash & Strachan). In the next step of the program clients are asked to engage in body-related activities that promote positive reinforcement of body image (Cash; Cash & Strachan). In the final step clients retake the assessment to determine if goals were met and they learn strategies for relapse prevention (Cash; Cash & Strachan). Cash and Strachan found in a study of 98 women dissatisfied with their bodies this 8-step program generated clinically and statistically significant improvements.

Conclusion

Body image is a very complex issue many women face. There are many factors which influence the development of body image and cause body image disturbance. This paper was intended to explain those factors so clinicians can have a comprehensive understanding of body image. Also, when working with clients struggling with body

image disturbance, it is important to be aware of the impact it can have on their lives.

Cognitive behavioral interventions and resources are provided in this paper, but there is

limited information on the effectiveness of the interventions. In addition, there is a lack

of information regarding other interventions used to help clients with body image

disturbance. This paper contains many references dated in the 1990's which suggests the

research of body image needs to be updated and further studied.

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