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Abstract

Purpose – Repeated exposure to unrealistic notions of female beauty and body shapes, and limited gender stereotypes, may result in the internalization of those standards by pre-adolescent girls. The purpose of this content analysis is to examine the celebrity role models to whom young girls are exposed via magazines specifically targeted at the “tween” audience. Female celebrities are contrasted with those in magazines targeted at older adolescent girls. **Design/methodology/approach** – Two pre-adolescent girls’ magazines, *Total Girl* and *Barbie*, and two adolescent girls’ magazines, *Dolly* and *Girlfriend*, were analyzed for the first six months of 2005. All photos (including advertising images) of female celebrities were recorded along with image context; celebrity occupation and age were researched. **Findings** – Results showed that there was little difference between pre-adolescent girls’ magazines and adolescent magazines in the frequency of celebrity images, and surprisingly only minimal difference in the average age of featured celebrities (22 compared with 23 years old). The occupations of the most frequent celebrities (in all magazines) were limited to actors, singers, and socialites. Further examination of the 12 most frequent celebrities appearing in the pre-adolescent magazines identified that many of them were publicly recorded as engaging in behaviors such as disordered eating and drug use. **Originality/value** – The study is novel in its analysis of celebrities in pre-adolescent magazines, which have grown in popularity over the last decade. The frequent appearance of relatively older celebrities who could be considered age-inappropriate role-models is cause for concern; educational interventions that focus on criticality towards female beauty standards need to be reinforced in primary schools.

Keywords

Are, pre, adolescent, girls, magazines, providing, age, appropriate, role, models

Disciplines

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Are pre-adolescent girls' magazines providing age-appropriate role models?

Research Paper

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Key words: Magazines, Celebrities, Standards, Girls, Influence

ABSTRACT

Purpose - Repeated exposure to unrealistic notions of female beauty and body shapes, and limited gender stereotypes, may result in the internalization of those standards by pre-adolescent girls. The purpose of this content analysis is to examine the celebrity role models to whom young girls are exposed to via magazines specifically targeted at the ‘tween’ audience. Female celebrities are contrasted with those in magazines targeted at older adolescent girls. **Design/methodology/approach** - Two pre-adolescent girls’ magazines, *Total Girl* and *Barbie*, and two adolescent girls’ magazines, *Dolly* and *Girlfriend*, were analyzed for the first six months of 2005. All photos (including advertising images) of female celebrities were recorded along with image context; celebrity occupation and age were researched. **Findings** - Results showed that there was little difference between pre-adolescent girls’ magazines and adolescent magazines in the frequency of celebrity images, and surprisingly only minimal difference in the average age of featured celebrities (22 compared to 23 years old). The occupations of the most frequent celebrities (in all magazines) were limited to actors, singers, and socialites. Further examination of the 12 most frequent celebrities appearing in the pre-adolescent magazines identified that many of them were publicly recorded as engaging in behaviors such as disordered eating and drug use. **Originality/value** - The study is novel in its analysis of celebrities in pre-adolescent magazines, which have grown in popularity over the last decade. The frequent appearance of relatively older celebrities who could be considered age-inappropriate role-models is cause for concern; educational interventions that focus on criticality towards female beauty standards need to be reinforced in primary schools.

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INTRODUCTION

Developmental and health issues for young females

Pre-adolescence is a transitional phase between childhood and adolescence that is associated with physical, cognitive, sexual and socio-emotional changes; pre-adolescents are establishing a sense of autonomy and are vulnerable to building their identity by trying to please others around them who they admire (Breinbauer and Maddaleno, 2005). This period (defined in this study as seven to 11 years old) is an important one in which to encourage the adoption of health-promoting beliefs and behaviors (Breinbauer and Maddaleno, 2005). Much has been written about risk taking during adolescence associated with substance use, violence, car accidents/dangerous driving, and unprotected or early sexual activity; however, some risk behaviors also stem from cosmetic motives, such as sun tanning (Shoveller *et al.*, 2003) or excessive dieting (Spear, 2006). In some instances, health-damaging behaviors may be linked to psychopathology; around 14 per cent of Australian girls aged four to 17 years old are estimated to have a mental health problem including depression and ADHD (Sawyer *et al.*, 2001). Alongside rising obesity concerns (e.g. Norton *et al.*, 2006; Spear, 2006), body image issues may have become increasingly relevant for pre-adolescent girls; unhealthy body image dissonance was evident among one sample of eight to 11 year old American girls who saw themselves on

average as three mass body index points larger than they actually were (Jung and Peterson, 2007).

Media images and the 'thin ideal' in children

As a girl grows up, she becomes increasingly aware of what society's standards are for the 'ideal body'; by the age of eight, girls are already aware of societal images of female beauty and have internalized the thin ideal (Sands and Wardle, 2002; Dohnt and Tiggemann, 2006). Social Comparison Theory posits that girls examine media images to learn what is beautiful, decide how they should look, and compare and try and match their appearance to what the media conveys as 'beautiful' (Levine *et al.*, 1994); US researchers have shown that this process markedly increases between the ages of eight to 12 (Martin and Kennedy, 1993). Society's portrayal of 'ideal' body shapes impacts not only a child's physical self-perception, but may also influence their perception of character traits associated with certain body shapes (Taylor *et al.*, 1998; Herbozo *et al.*, 2004).

Content analyses in the US have shown magazines in particular to be filled with unrealistically thin models and appearance related topics (Cusumano and Thompson, 1997). While the relationship is complex, viewing ultra-thin or average-size models in magazines can, for some women, lead to an increase in body dissatisfaction, a decrease in self-esteem and a reduction in self-evaluation of their physical attractiveness (Clay *et al.*, 2005; Hofschire and Greenber, 2002; Shaw, 1995; Botta, 2003; Harrison, 2000; Levine *et*

al., 1994). An Australian study of 144 female undergraduate students (Slater and Tiggemann, 2006) found that reading magazines, but not watching television, was correlated with body shame; and importantly, that ‘the associations between reported media exposure during childhood and adolescence and adult body image were stronger than that between current media exposure and body image’ (p. 562).

Botta (2003) found that thinking about the central content (such as articles, letters, and columns) in US magazines was not related to increased body dissatisfaction, whereas noticing actors’ and models’ bodies (i.e., peripheral content) was. The possibility exists that younger children may process media content differently to adults, and peripheral content of magazines may be a focus of their consumption. However, one study found that exposure to appearance-focused media, including magazines, was not directly related to body dissatisfaction among Australian nine-to-12 year old girls, but was indirectly related to peer conversations about appearance, which in turn was significantly related to internalization of thin ideals and body dissatisfaction (Clark and Tiggemann, 2006).

The pre-adolescent market, magazines and celebrities

The pre-adolescent, or ‘tweenager’, market is becoming increasingly powerful.

Circulation records over the past decade indicate an increase in the production and sales of pre-adolescent magazines in Australia (B & T Weekly, 2005). According to McMahon (2002), these magazines are characterized by:

- precise targeting by age;

- clear gender differences;
- volatility; and
- rapidly changing life cycles, and many titles related to specific brands and marketing phenomena.

A review of data from UK media usage surveys (McMahon, 2002) reported that in 2001, 90 per cent of seven to 14 year olds reported reading magazines, with 19 per cent purchasing one weekly.

The notion that pre-adolescent magazines may impact on the way young readers think about their bodies is not new: Australian researcher O'Brien (1997) states that in the magazine *Barbie*, "the young reader's body is presented as no longer sufficient in its natural state and must be morphed into the world of the female through Barbie ownership and imitation" (p. 53). Napoli *et al.* (2003) found that advertisements in *Barbie* in the US appeared to reinforce the feminine ideal image; models in *Barbie* and adolescent magazines *Dolly* and *Girlfriend* were almost all of similar size and shape, and with a similar age category of the central character (slightly younger and more realistic models did appear in *Barbie*, but differences were non-significant). Although *Total Girl* was classified as a teenage magazine by Dohnt and Tiggemann (2006), the Australian publication was described as having a 'large' focus on appearance factors or emphasis on the thin ideal. Other Australian authors have asserted that material in *Barbie* and *Total Girl* encourages the premature sexualization of readers (Rush and La Nauze, 2006); an American Psychological Association (APA) report also linked the focus on appearance

(as a means of being sexually desirable) in magazines with the sexualization of girls (APA Task Force, 2007).

Magazines often heavily feature celebrity images, and pre-adolescent girls' magazines are no exception - for example, *Total Girl*, which is aimed at six to 12 year old Australian girls, claimed in 2005 to feature "the latest celeb gossip tailored for tweens" (www.pacificmagazines.com.au). Research companies such as *Roy Morgan Research* report that Australian girls aged six to 13 'love music and celebrities' (Cox, 2004); when eight to 11 year old US girls were asked what they liked seeing in magazines, they most often mentioned famous actors/actresses (Jung and Peterson, 2007). Among adolescents, celebrity comparison and identification has been significantly linked to increased body dissatisfaction, increased drive for thinness and increased bulimic behaviors (Heinberg, 1996). Celebrity role models may potentially have an enormous impact on young children's perceptions and behavior (Napoli, 2004). Recent qualitative research with young children in the UK has demonstrated that these children perceive celebrities as cultural icons – and idealize, identify with, and imitate these celebrities (and associated brand names); behaviors such as wearing the same style of clothing help them develop a 'bond' with the celebrity and allows them to (temporarily) 'become' their idol (Boden, 2006). However, there is a research gap in our understanding of the celebrity role models that are presented to young girls.

Marketing to pre-adolescent girls using celebrity endorsement appears to be as sophisticated as it is to female adults. For example, an American advertising campaign

for *Candies* shoes featured the pop star Ashlee Simpson; the singer is considered a ‘good girl with a wholesome image, yet the ad shows a scantily clad Ashlee Simpson in a sexy pose wearing a pair of Candies high heels’ (CBC News, 2005). Marketers may ignore, or even exploit, the particularly sensitive nature of the pre-adolescent influential developmental period, and present celebrity role models who are too sophisticated for the target readers, in terms of age and physical appearance.

The presence and presentation of celebrity role models in pre-adolescent magazines, as well as details regarding the kinds of activities the celebrity participates in, may powerfully affect how girls view their role in today’s society, and may be providing a very narrow definition of femaleness. There is a large body of research documenting the association between media exposure and perceptions of the work-roles of women (e.g., Potter and Chang, 1990), as well as the more general influence of media exposure on gender role and sexual stereotypes and attitudes (see Ward and Harrison (2005) for a review). According to Objectification Theory, pervasive sexual objectification of females in the media (and society in general) leads women to internalize those views - they adopt an observer’s perspective of their physical appearance and see themselves as an object to be looked at and evaluated (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Self-objectification and sexualization also possibly disrupts mental capacity among girls (via less cognitive resources given to school work, and preoccupation with appearance monitoring) and encourages them to prioritize male attention over academic achievement and aspire to occupations that are consistent with a sexy self-image, such as pop star or other celebrity occupations (APA Task Force, 2007).

It is important to understand the nature of the role model images and magazine material consumed by pre-adolescent readers, in order to assist in encouraging critical media analysis and positive peer discussion; pre-adolescent health education may be constructive in cushioning the social comparison and self-objectification process. The aim of the present study was to examine and describe the types of female role models that pre-adolescent girls are exposed to via the increasingly popular magazines targeted at them. This content analysis extends previous research about advertising models in pre-adolescent magazines (Napoli *et al.*, 2003) by focusing on celebrities, who are more likely to serve as role models given the added detail about celebrity lives that is transmitted by the media. Further research on girls' role models is timely in the context of calls for research on age compression or 'adultification' and sexualization of girls (as opposed to women) in the media (APA Task Force, 2007). It was hypothesized that celebrity images would be more frequent in the adolescent magazines and that the average age of the featured celebrities would differ between the pre-adolescent and adolescent magazines, consistent with the different age groups of the target readers.

METHOD

A content analysis was conducted to examine the types of role models being presented in two Australian pre-adolescent girls' magazines (*Total Girl* and *Barbie*), and two adolescent girls' magazines (*Dolly* and *Girlfriend*). Details of the magazines, target audiences, circulation and readership figures are provided in Table I. Rush and La Nauze (2006) presented data based on the Roy Morgan Young Australians survey (April 2005 –

March 2006) suggesting that readership peaks at around age eight (13 per cent) for *Barbie* and ten and 11 (37 per cent) for *Total Girl*; 8 and 11 per cent of six year old girls respectively read each title.

For the purpose of this study, a role model image was defined as any image of a female celebrity, presented in any context - including advertising. A 'celebrity' was defined as a real, famous person who is widely recognized in Australia or internationally (not an animated character such as Lara Croft).

**** INSERT TABLE I HERE ****

All issues of the four magazines were examined for the period January to June 2005 (i.e., six issues of each magazine title). All images (defined as photographs) of female celebrities were recorded; images may or may not have been accompanied by text identifying the individual. Textual references to a celebrity without an accompanying photo were not recorded, because focusing on peripheral content (such as body size of those pictured) is more related to reader body dissatisfaction than central content (Botta, 2003). Links between the image and surrounding page text were analyzed to establish the context in which the image appeared (advertising/promotions, competitions/games/puzzles, celebrity gossip, interviews/articles specifically about the celebrity, occupation/personal profiles on the celebrity, feature articles not specifically about celebrities, fashion/hair/beauty articles, editorials and other). An example of a

feature article might be “how to learn to play a musical instrument”; examples of editorials include Editors Letter and Monthly Calendar.

The focus of this research is primarily the age-appropriateness of the celebrities, and secondly the female roles they portray. Therefore, using information from the magazines themselves, and further research via Google where necessary, the age of each celebrity in 2005 was established, as well as occupation based on the individual’s predominant activities in the preceding 12 months (coded as actor, singer, singer/actor, socialite, sportswoman, fashion model, and other, e.g., radio hosts and cooks). Note that we recognize that ‘socialite’ is not an occupation; however, this category was added when we identified a number of frequently-appearing celebrities who had no other known occupation (those often referred to as ‘famous for being famous’).

RESULTS

There was a difference in the overall size of the pre-adolescent and adolescent magazines, with the adolescent magazines’ overall size (852.5cm squared) notably larger than the pre-adolescent magazines’ overall size (308.7cm squared). The number of pages per magazine also differed considerably between the two age groups, with adolescent magazines containing roughly 1.5 times the amount of pages per magazine.

Frequency of celebrity images

A total of 925 celebrity images were found in the two pre-adolescent girls' magazines, while 1410 celebrity images were found in the two adolescent magazines; however, given the differences in page numbers mentioned above, this in fact means that the number of celebrity images was remarkably similar for the two target groups. In total, the pre-adolescent magazines averaged 0.76 images per page, compared to 0.73 images per page in the adolescent magazines. Note that these figures refer to celebrity images in any type of magazine content including, but not limited to, advertising.

Within the adolescent category, there was minimal difference between the two magazines; *Girlfriend* averaged 0.76 celebrity images per page, while *Dolly* averaged 0.71 per page. However, there was a substantial difference in the amount of celebrity images between the two pre-adolescent magazines, with *Total Girl* containing 62.4 per cent of the celebrity images appearing in the pre-adolescent magazines; *Total Girl* averaged 0.82 celebrity images per page, while *Barbie* averaged 0.70 per page.

Ages and roles of celebrities

Analysis of the celebrities appearing in the magazines revealed that six out of the 12 most popular celebrities appearing in the pre-adolescent magazines were the same as those in the adolescent girl's magazines (see Table II), with Lindsay Lohan and Hilary Duff in the top five for both groups.

There was remarkably little difference in the average age of the celebrities featured in the two types of magazines: the age of the 12 most popular celebrities in the pre-adolescent magazines ranged from 16-26, with an average of 22 years; and the age of the 12 most popular celebrities in the adolescent magazines ranged from 18-27, with an average of 23 years (see Table II).

**** INSERT TABLE II HERE ****

The occupations of the celebrities appearing in the pre-adolescent magazines consisted of actor/singers (38.7 per cent), actors (35.1 per cent), singers (20.5 per cent), socialites (5 per cent), sportswomen (0.2 per cent) and fashion models (0.2 per cent). Apart from a notable difference in socialite (5.0 per cent in pre-adolescent and 10.9 per cent in adolescent magazines) and fashion model (0.2 per cent in pre-adolescent and 4.3 per cent in adolescent magazines) image frequencies, similar results were found in the adolescent magazines (see Table III).

**** INSERT TABLE III HERE ****

Context of celebrity images

Analyses of the context in which the celebrity images appeared in the pre-adolescent magazines (see Table III) showed a fairly even distribution between the coded contexts, with the majority of the celebrity images appearing in editorials (18.8 per cent), followed

by feature articles (17.6 per cent), then advertising and promotions (15.2 per cent). In contrast, the adolescent magazines had more distinct areas in which the celebrity images appeared, with the majority of images presented in fashion, hair, beauty (29.7 per cent), celebrity gossip (27 per cent), and advertising and promotions (12.3 per cent).

DISCUSSION

It was expected that, due to the differences in their target audiences, celebrity images would be more frequent in the adolescent magazines than those targeted at pre-adolescents. Surprisingly this was not the case, with virtually no difference in the proportion of celebrity images in the two types of magazines. Additionally, while we did not expect the celebrities in the pre-adolescent magazines to be of the same age as the target audience (i.e., predominantly six to ten years of age), we did expect them to be, on average, younger than those featured in the adolescent magazines. Again, this was not the case – with virtually no difference in the average age (or age range) of featured celebrities. We view the latter finding as important and concerning, as the resulting age mismatch highlights a possible lack of age-appropriateness of the role models presented to pre-adolescent girls (which is not to say that we necessarily view these celebrities as appropriate for the adolescent target group).

The main focus of the present study was the lack of age correspondence between the celebrities and the target audience. An implication of this is the gender role stereotyping that young girls may be exposed to, particularly if age-inappropriate role models are also ‘behavior-inappropriate’. The personal and occupational profiles of the celebrities who

appeared in all of the magazines were limited. In particular, there was a dearth of positive roles portrayed in the pre-adolescent magazines; with only 0.2 per cent of the celebrities being sportswomen, and an absence of celebrities demonstrating other potential career options (such as politicians, authors, or scientists).

Although body mass index figures were not available (and this study did not establish that the celebrities presented were unhealthy), the celebrities presented strongly conformed to the 'thin ideal'. It is evident that physical appearance frequently takes precedence over other attributes in regards to celebrity preference among young readers, which is of concern, because most young girls do not meet this cultural standard of physical attractiveness. For both the pre-adolescent and adolescent audiences, one may speculate the role models we found are negatively influential in terms of body image and self worth. This study highlights how magazines targeting pre-adolescent girls appear to promote the same limited notions of female beauty that one would expect to find in female adult magazines. Further examination (via a search of Google News in 2005) of the 12 most popular celebrities appearing in the pre-adolescent magazines easily and quickly identified at least five of the 12 as having admitted to, or being recorded as suffering from, some form of disordered eating; three having been recorded as suffering from alcohol and drug abuse; and one having participated in a pornographic film which is easily obtained over the internet.

Our findings in relation to the context in which the celebrities appeared demonstrate that the pre-adolescent magazines' utilization of such images appears to be gratuitous rather

than relevant to the content of the accompanying text. That is, one may expect celebrity images to appear in such contexts as 'Celebrity Gossip' and 'Fashion and Beauty' pages of the magazines, as well as articles where there is direct discussion of the celebrity themselves; but the majority of the celebrity images in the pre-adolescent magazines appear to be presented regardless of any rational links between the images and the stories, features or articles in the magazines. For example, in the pre-adolescent magazines, more than a third of the images appeared in articles completely unrelated to the images (non-celebrity feature articles and editorials). This highlights concerns that readers of the magazine are being overwhelmed with such images, to the exclusion of more appropriate and realistic images of 'normal' people. Rush and La Nauze (2006) - who estimated that 35, 23 and 38 per cent of one 2006 issue each of *Total Girl*, *Barbie* and *Disney Girl* respectively were devoted to celebrities - pointed out that even more 'normal' girls are often made to look the same as celebrities, with their images shown alongside the celebrity images. This demonstrates the pressure placed on children to look like miniature adults.

Magazine editors generally have less control over paid-for advertising content than other content, however only 12-15 per cent of the celebrity images occurred in an overt advertising context (most of the substantial amount of overt advertising did not involve celebrity endorsement). It could be argued that editorial content in magazines can serve an educational role by highlighting dieting or drug use by celebrities and using the opportunity to discuss these serious issues. In our readings of pre-adolescent magazines, celebrity images were not used in a 'warning/avoid' context. They often appeared in an

‘emulate’ context, for example, “Barbie copycat” (*Barbie*, January 2005, p. 39) advertises clothes and accessories to look like Jessica Alba and “It’s all about the hair” (*Total Girl*, October 2005, pp. 80-81) provides a quiz to find which celebrity hair style suits the reader (also see Rush and La Nauze, 2006, p.17). However, as stated above, they were also just ‘there’ in an almost ubiquitous sense, as if they were representative of all females - for example, “Barbie food” (*Barbie*, February 2005, p.58) presents a recipe for a vegetarian burger with an image of ‘cutie’ Katie Holmes who apparently likes such burgers but was not eating one in the photo.

In contrast with pre-adolescent magazines, adolescent magazines did present celebrities in a ‘warning/avoid’ context as well as ‘emulate’ contexts,, demonstrating that the way in which celebrities are held up as role models is a complex process. For example, “Rich, Famous & Starving: Young celebs dying to be thin” (*Dolly*, February 2005, pp.80-81) focuses on eating disorders, “Your worst habits exposed!” (*Girlfriend*, July 2005, pp.53) discusses smoking as a bad habit and has a picture of Britney Spears smoking alongside, and “What drug dealers won’t tell you” (*Girlfriend*, June 2005, pp.64-67) quotes Britney Spears saying that she parties hard but would never fool around with drugs. However, we question the relative impact or cushioning effect of an article about positive body image when the next page is likely to present a happy thin celebrity in a bikini. Napoli (2004) also writes of the implicit contradictions contained in some pre-adolescent celebrity messages: “On one hand, the message celebrates girls by presenting empowering images of Mary-Kate and Ashley solving problems and winning competitions. Yet, the branding

of fashion and beauty products reinforces a girl's desire for the ideal feminine image” (no page number available).

Limitations

Definitions of ‘age-appropriateness’ and assertions regarding what is a positive or negative role model are subjective. A major review acknowledged that what is appropriate for a high school girl may not be appropriate for a six year old, but could give no firm guidelines (APA Task Force, 2007) while Rush and La Nauze (2006) clearly labeled celebrity material as sexualizing and developmentally inappropriate. Owing to lack of similar research in the past, the current study was unable to replicate coding and definitions. However – as much of the coding was relatively straightforward or factual (e.g., age of celebrity) – we are confident that our findings are a reasonable representation of the magazines’ content. This study did not attempt to rate the images for ‘sexiness’ and compare this concept across the different magazines, nor did it code for ‘emulate’ or ‘warning’ contexts for all celebrity images. As this was purely a content analysis, drawing any conclusions about the relationship between exposure to celebrity images and the beliefs, attitudes or behaviors of the target audiences was beyond the scope of the study. However, our findings suggest a complex and multifaceted study of a causal relationship with body dissatisfaction is warranted.

Implications

Ideally, media aimed at pre-adolescent girls could serve a public health role by refraining from portraying celebrities who are not age-appropriate for the readers, or who present extremely unachievable images of female beauty along with quite limited notions of what it means to be a respected and admired female within our society. The female images presented in children's magazines should be more realistic and portray celebrities of all shapes and sizes, with various occupations included (rather than just those associated with the entertainment industry). It needs to be acknowledged that young girls do like pictures of famous actresses (Jung and Peterson, 2007), and editors are unlikely to ignore this.

However, it is both important and practical to provide pre-adolescent girls with the tools to deconstruct the images they are bombarded with; the present study implicates a strong need for media literacy programs to target pre-adolescent females, in addition to adolescent females. Educational interventions – such as the Body Armor Prevention Program (Neu Menassa and Farooqu, 2005) and the Australian BodyThink Program (Butterfly Foundation, 2008) – need to be integrated into the current primary schools' Physical Education Curriculum, and focus on presenting and reinforcing a critical stance towards female beauty standards and gender roles. Given that Clark and Tiggemann (2006) emphasized the key role of peer conversations in processing the content of appearance-related media concepts, media literacy interventions may need to encourage peer conversations that are critical of celebrity beauty standards. 'Media Matters', developed by The American Association of Pediatrics (Hogan, 1999), encourages families to become involved in media education; critical thinking can be incorporated by

adults and families into daily conversations with children, for example, parents could ask their daughters: ‘Does that celebrity look healthy? Why would they use that celebrity to model those clothes?’

Finally, this study has helped establish that the unrealistic, highly unattainable cultural notion of female beauty may be reaching pre-adolescent girls via celebrity images in popular media aimed specifically at this age group. Further research attention must be given to assessing the frequency and time spent reading such magazines, and how young girls process the content of the magazines, as well as the impact of celebrity role models on pre-adolescent girl’s body size and shape perceptions and preferences. Ratings of ‘sexiness’ or ‘sexual desirability’ of these images (by girls and adults) should be incorporated (with attention paid to how young people define and use the term ‘sexy’).

CONCLUSIONS

There was virtually no difference in the proportion of celebrity images in adolescent and pre-adolescent magazines, and little difference in the average age of included celebrities. Many celebrity images appeared in articles completely unrelated to the images. Images presented conformed to the ‘thin ideal’ and limited representations of career roles were included. Further examination of the 12 most frequent celebrities appearing in the pre-adolescent magazines identified that many of them publicly engaged in behaviors that made them poor role models for young girls. The findings demonstrate a strong need for increased awareness and research regarding the nature and consequences of images

presented in pre-adolescent magazines, and suggest that media literacy programs need to target pre-adolescent girls.

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Table I: Magazines Included for Content Analysis

Title	Circulation* (readership)**	Editorial positioning and target audience (both from publisher websites accessed in 2005)	
<i>Total Girl</i> Pacific Magazines (monthly)	90,204	<i>Total Girl</i> magazine 'understands tween girls and creates a girls only zone - a kind of secret club - that boys and parents don't understand... To discover the latest trends, entertainment news, cool activities and friendship advice more Australian tween girls buy <i>Total Girl</i> each month than any other tween girl's magazine.' (www.pacificmags.com.au)	Six to 12 year old girls
<i>Barbie</i> EMAP Australia (monthly)	30,592	<i>Barbie</i> magazine 'is Australia's premium lifestyle mag for girls aged five-to-12. It's packed with heaps of hot fashion, pretty beauty bits, unreal activities, and all the latest entertainment news and incredible competitions! It's inspirational, cool and above all fun.' (www.emap.com.au)	Five to 12 year old girls
<i>Girlfriend</i> Pacific Magazines (monthly)	142,562 (441,000)	<i>Girlfriend</i> magazine 'is Australia's best teen girls magazine. It is independent, smart, a little bit naughty and pretty damn cool. It is still familiar, comfortable and trusted like a good friend but it also likes to shock you with its honesty, surprise you with its innovation, engage you with its quality and impress you with its creativity.' (www.pacificmags.com.au)	14-17 year old girls
<i>Dolly</i> ACP Magazines (monthly)	170,357 (562,000)	<i>Dolly</i> magazine 'covers every aspect of a girl's life from fashion, health and beauty to celebrities, entertainment and social issues... The key to <i>Dolly's</i> massive success is that it relates to teenagers on their own level - it's a valued friend and confidante. <i>Dolly</i> is the single most trusted source of information for teenager girls.' (www.acp.com.au)	14-17 year old girls

* Audit Bureau Circulation data Jan-June 2005 (Australia only) and

** Roy Morgan Readership Survey Jan-Dec 2005 (males and females 14+ only); data

provided by Magazine Publishers of Australia (www.magazines.org.au)

Table 2: Most Frequently Appearing Celebrities In Pre-adolescent And Adolescent Magazines

Pre-Adolescent Magazines			Adolescent Magazines		
Celebrity	(%)	Age	Celebrity	(%)	Age
Hilary Duff	5.6	19	Mischa Barton	5.4	18
Delta Goodrem	5.5	22	Paris Hilton	5.3	25
Olsen Twins	5.2	19	Rachel Bilson	4.9	25
Lindsay Lohan	5.1	19	Lindsay Lohan	4.7	19
Jessica Simpson	4.0	26	Hilary Duff	4.0	19
Beyonce Knowles	4.0	25	Britney Spears	3.1	25
Mischa Barton	3.2	18	Ashlee Simpson	3.1	22
JoJo	3.1	16	Jessica Simpson	2.8	26
Tammin Sursok	2.7	23	Nicole Richie	2.7	25
Ashlee Simpson	2.6	22	Delta Goodrem	2.6	22
Rachel Bilson	2.4	25	Nicky Hilton	2.3	23
Paris Hilton	2.3	25	Gwen Stefani	1.7	27

Table III: Frequency Of Celebrity Occupations And Image Contexts: Pre-adolescent vs Adolescent Magazines

	Pre-adolescent (per cent of images)	Adolescent (per cent of images)
Celebrity Occupation		
Actor	35.1	41.8
Singer	20.5	18.2
Actor/Singer	38.7	22.9
Socialite	5.0	10.9
Sportswoman	0.2	1.1
Fashion Model	0.2	4.3
Other	0.2	0.8
Image Context		
Advertising and Promotion	15.2	12.3
Competitions, Games and Puzzles	7.6	5.9
Celebrity Gossip	13.8	27.0
Interview/Article on Celebrity	2.8	3.8
Personal and Occupation Profiles	3.6	1.1
Feature Articles	17.6	11.4
Fashion/Hair/Beauty	12.6	29.7
Editorials	18.8	7.2
Other	7.9	1.6

