

BUMPING UP THE BODY: EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF CELEBRITY GOSSIP
MAGAZINES ON BODY IMAGE DURING PREGNANCY

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ABSTRACT

The present analysis examined the impact of celebrity gossip magazine coverage on pregnant women through both quantitative and qualitative methods. Study 1 employed both objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) and social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954) in an experimental design. Results showed that exposure to full-body sexually objectified images and text concerning pregnant celebrities resulted in more social comparison than non-objectifying images and text. However, exposure to non-objectifying headshot-only images and accompanying text concerning celebrities resulted in significantly more self-objectification than exposure to control images of baby products. Study 2 employed the articulation model of meaning (Hall, 1986) in small group discussions in which participants indicated that they recognize how celebrity gossip magazines sexually objectify pregnant celebrities. Participants largely criticized this sexual objectification while simultaneously describing their own objectification of pregnant celebrities featured in these magazines. Although they did not feel as if they were negatively affected by this sexual objectification in the long term, participants indicated that younger pregnant women most likely are. The results of both studies are interpreted in light of objectification theory, social comparison theory, and the articulation model of meaning.