ABSTRACT

The relationship between body image and marital satisfaction

Nancy Ellis-Ordway

Alex Waigandt, PhD., Dissertation Supervisor

The effects of weight stigma and its internalized variation, body dissatisfaction, have been documented in many aspects of life, including economics, education, families and the media. Limited literature exists regarding the effects of body satisfaction within the marital dyad. This study attempted to explore the interaction of body image and marital satisfaction.

Participants were recruited using social media. Married heterosexual couples were asked to each complete an online survey regarding their own feelings about their bodies and their marriages. Answers for spouses were linked in the database, resulting in 64 couples who completed the survey. Body satisfaction was measured using the Body Appreciation Scale and the Body Shape Questionnaire. Marital satisfaction was measured using the Couples Satisfaction Index. Height and weight information was used to calculate Body Mass Index. Linear regression was used to explore significant correlations. Body Mass Index was more strongly correlated with husbands’ body satisfaction than it was for wives. Husbands’ body satisfaction was found to weakly but significantly correlate with marital satisfaction for husbands, wives and couples. Wives’ body satisfaction was not found to correlate with marital satisfaction at a statistically significant level.