

## **The Relationship Health and Attractiveness Self-Ratings with Body Satisfaction and Health Behavior**

BRIANNA N HENSON, ERICA G KNOWLES, and MARK D FARIES

Lifestyle Medicine & Behavior Laboratory; Department of Kinesiology & Health Science; Stephen F Austin State University; Nacogdoches, TX

---

*Category: Undergraduate*

*Advisor / Mentor: Faries, Mark D. (fariesmd@sfasu.edu)*

### ABSTRACT

'Trigger Theory' suggests that for a discrepancy to act as a trigger, the discrepancy must be interpreted as a 'threat' to an important self-concept or self-view. Triggering events have been cited as important sparks for weight loss and control behaviors in women, but only certain discrepancies result in a triggering event. The purpose for this study was to determine if there was a relationship between self-rated attractiveness and health with body mass index (BMI) self-esteem, weight satisfaction, dietary intake, and physical activity (PA). A relationship would indicate a role of both attractiveness and health self-views in self-concept and self-esteem, thus preferred self-views to examine in the future experimental research of Trigger Theory. Online surveys were distributed to 461 women who wanted to lose or maintain body weight. The surveys included self-reports of height and weight, which were used to calculate BMI. Self-ratings of attractiveness and health were developed from the Self-Conceptions Questionnaire, asking participants to rate their own physical attractiveness and physical health relative to others her age and gender. Responses ranged from bottom 5% to top 5%. The Global PA Questionnaire assessed PA, and only the total minutes per week of moderate to vigorous PA were used in the study. Dietary intake was assessed through a food frequency questionnaire, where foods were averaged into two factors of interests, fruits/vegetables and high fat/high sugar foods. Weight satisfaction was determined using a 5- point scale from 1 (extremely dissatisfied) to 5 (extremely satisfied). For global self-esteem, women rated how strongly they agreed or disagreed with, "I see myself as someone who has high self-esteem," on a 5-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Both self-ratings of attractiveness and health positively correlated with weight satisfaction and self-esteem. The higher one's self-rating of attractiveness and health, the higher her satisfaction with weight and self-esteem. In addition, self-ratings of attractiveness and health were negatively correlated with BMI. These results support the theory that self-ratings can be greatly valued factors that, when threatened, become the motivators needed to influence changes in health behaviors. The weak correlation of PA and dietary intake with self-views of health suggests that those who see themselves as healthy in comparison to others their age (a part of their self-concept) might be more active and eat healthier. The lack of correlation of PA and dietary intake with self-views of attractiveness suggests that there is no relationship between how attractive one thinks she is, and how active she is or how healthy she eats. It is possible, then, that women can maintain or improve how attractive they think they are without engaging in healthy behaviors, such as through camouflaging their body with clothes and other methods.