

Abstract

The present study examines the sex differences in judgment of physical attractiveness and body dissatisfaction among Chinese adolescents. Subjects, 480 secondary school male and 571 female students, completed measures assessing physical attractiveness, body dissatisfaction, depressive symptoms and self-esteem. Results indicated that both sexes preferred female to be taller but slimmer, and male to be taller and bigger. Among all body features, health, height, weight, body scent and smile were rated by both sexes as most important in judging male's attractiveness. While, health, body weight and smile were rated as most important in judging female's attractiveness. Boys rarely dissatisfied with their bodies while girls showed dissatisfaction towards most of the body parts especially those where fat easily accumulates such as stomach, waist, hips and legs. Body satisfaction was positively correlated with self-esteem but negatively correlated with depression. Results implied that Chinese boys still remain quite traditional in judging female's attractiveness. Girls, however, adapt more western-like standard. The acquisition of Western ideal of beauty and the subsequent body dissatisfaction may lead to higher prevalence of weight control behaviors and eating disorders.