Introduction

- Increase in body image dissatisfaction in men – muscularity compared to thinness.
- Alhert and Walker (2004) found that bodybuilders experienced pressure to conform to masculine ideals and that greater pressure contributed to psychological distress.
- Increase in eating disorders in men
Several studies have found high concordance rates of homosexuality (10% - 42%) and anorexia nervosa in men (Carlat, Camargo, & Herzog, 1997; Herzog, Norman, Gordon, & Pepose, 1984; Olivardia, Pope, Mangweth, & Hudson, 1995; Russel, & Keel, 2002). Homosexuality has also been established as a predictive factor of eating disorders in men (Carlat et al. 1997; Russel and Keel, 2002).

Body image in gay men – greater concern than in heterosexual men.
- Defense against effeminacy?
- Role of internalised homophobia?
- Greater emphasis on physical attractiveness in gay men
- Role of gay media?
The aims of this study

- To determine predictors of body image dissatisfaction in gay men in relation to both muscularity and thinness
  - masculine norms (in relation to muscularity only)
  - internalized homophobia
  - the media and gay media (would predict more variance in the case of dissatisfaction in relation to muscularity)

Method

- The sample comprised of 172 gay men aged between 18 and 40 years (mean age = 28.83 years, SD = 8.84 years)
- 61% Australian
- 32% British
- 2.3% American
- 2.9% did not report nationality.
Measures - Criterion Variable

- The Multidimensional Body-Self Relations Questionnaire – Appearance Scales (MBSRQ-AS) were used to measure the importance of physical attractiveness, grooming and thinness (Cash, 1990).
- Body ideal distress and desire for muscularity was measured using Kimmel and Mahalik’s (2004) Masculine Body Ideal Distress Scale (MBIDS).

Measures - Predictor Variables

- The Internalized Homophobia Scale (IHS) (Martin & Dean, 1987).
- The Male Role Norms Scale (MRNS) (Thompson & Pleck, 1986). The 26-item scale includes three factors: status, toughness and anti-femininity.
The Media Frequency and Impact Questionnaire (MFIQ) was devised for use in this study based on questionnaires and the findings of previous research (Labre, 2005; Low, 2007; Philaretou, Mahfouz & Allen, 2005; Pope, Olivardia, Gruber, et al. 1999; Schooler & Ward, 2006; Soban, 2006; Weber, 2006; Yang et al. 2005).

The Media Frequency and Impact Questionnaire (MFIQ) consists of 13 individual items measuring a diverse range of behaviours in relation to the media rather than a construct called media exposure. As such the items together do not constitute a scale. Therefore, each participant had 13 separate scores rather than a total score. For example, participants’ exposure to the print media doesn’t necessarily correlate highly with their exposure to the electronic media and, furthermore, their exposure to one form of print media (men’s health magazines) doesn’t necessarily correlate highly with their exposure to other forms of print media, such as gay newspapers.
Procedure

- Online questionnaire
- Study advertised to gay hobby groups and clubs
  - 17 in Australia
  - 2 in USA
  - 11 in UK
  - 2 gay interest web sites

Table 1

*Means and Standard Deviations of Body Image Dissatisfaction and Internalized Homophobia, Masculine Norms and Media (N = 119)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MBSRQ-AS (attractiveness/thinness body image dissatisfaction)</td>
<td>109.58</td>
<td>12.79</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBIDS (muscular body image dissatisfaction)</td>
<td>19.97</td>
<td>5.56</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IHS (internalized homophobia)</td>
<td>16.96</td>
<td>6.70</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRNS (masculine norms)</td>
<td>82.13</td>
<td>19.37</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1
Means and Standard Deviations of Body Image Dissatisfaction and Internalized Homophobia, Masculine Norms and Media (N =119)

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<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Media 1 (men’s magazines)</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media 2 (television)</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media 3 (gay magazines)</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media 4 (music videos)</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media 5 (images of naked men)</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media 6 (advertisements featuring men)</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media 7 (video games)</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media 8 (effect of ads. on purchasing)</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media 9 (action figures)</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Media 10 (Action films)</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media 11 (effect on clothing purchases)</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media 12 (effect on cologne purchases)</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media 13 (time spent on internet)</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Multiple regression 1

- Criterion variable: attractiveness/thinness body-image dissatisfaction.
- Predictor variables: internalized homophobia, media, and masculine norms
- Differed significantly from zero, $F(12, 109) = 2.71, p < .05$. Accounted for 23% of the variance.
  - internalized homophobia - 4% of the variance
  - media 5 (frequency of playing video games) - 8% of the variance
  - masculine norms - 4% of the variance.
Multiple regression 2

- Criterion variable: muscular body-image dissatisfaction
- Predictor variables: internalized homophobia, media, and masculine norms
- Differed significantly from zero, $F(12, 109) = 6.19$, $p < .05$. Accounted for 40% of the variance.
  - media 9 (attractive models influencing clothing purchases) - 5% of the variance

Multiple regression 3

- Criterion variable: attractiveness/thinness body-image dissatisfaction.
- Predictor variables: 10 media items
- Differed significantly from zero, $F(10, 111) = 2.29$, $p = < .05$. Accounted for 17% of the variance.
  - media 5 (frequency of playing video games) - 7% of the variance
Multiple regression 4

- Criterion variable: muscular body-image dissatisfaction
- Predictor variables: 10 media items
- Differed significantly from zero, $F(10, 111) = 7.34$, $p < .05$  Accounted for 40% of the variance.
  - Media 9 (attractive models influencing clothing purchases) - 5% of the variance
  - Media 8 (frequency of watching action movies) – 2% of variance

Discussion

- Overall positive association between internalized homophobia, conformity to masculine norms, exposure to the media and gay media and body image dissatisfaction (in relation to both muscularity and thinness).
- Exposure to the media and gay media contributed the most variance in muscular and thinness body image dissatisfaction.
- Media and gay media exposure predicted a larger proportion of variance in muscular body image dissatisfaction than thinness body image.
- Internalized homophobia contributed a unique amount of variance in thinness body image dissatisfaction.
- The prediction that masculine norms would contribute a unique amount of variance in muscular body image dissatisfaction was not supported.
Discussion

- First quantitative evidence of the impact of the media and gay media on body image dissatisfaction, although various writers have proposed such a relationship.
- Unexpected finding that the frequency of playing video games on consoles such as the Playstation and X-box uniquely contributed a proportion of variance in thinness body image dissatisfaction.

Discussion

- Finding not reported previously, that exposure to pornographic imagery in the form of idealistic, naked and muscular men in films or still images contributed a small proportion of variance in muscular body image dissatisfaction.
Limitations

- Recruitment through the internet – Many gay men use the internet as a forum for men to meet other men for sex – participants may therefore be more concerned with body image for purpose of attracting sexual partners.

Future research

- Impact of the video game revolution on body-image dissatisfaction among heterosexual and gay men
- Role of pornography in muscular body image dissatisfaction in gay men
- Measure the extent of involvement in the gay community