

Fact or Wishful Thinking? Biased Expectations in “I Think I Look Better When I’m Tanned”

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Objective: To examine the impact of tanned female images on respondents’ perceptions of attractiveness, healthiness, and height and weight estimations. **Method:** A 3 (light, medium, or dark tan) by 2 (male or female respondent) experimental design. **Results:** Only male respondents perceived the dark-tanned woman as more physically attractive and thinner than both light- and medium-tanned women. Men also perceived the dark-tanned woman

as more interpersonally attractive and healthier than the medium-tanned woman. **Conclusions:** Campaigns targeted at males need to reduce the perceptions that tanned females are healthier, thinner, and more attractive. Educational efforts targeting females need to reduce attraction-based motivations.

Key words: Indoor tanning, perceptions of tanning, skin cancer, tanning bed use

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