



Fashion and health: Exploring the relationship

Rajeev Kumar

Assistant Professor Amity School of Fashion Technology, Amity University, Chhattisgarh, India

Abstract

The relationship between fashion and health is a complex one, with fashion sometimes being shaped by current beliefs about health and disease other times, acting as the cause of illness. Often high fashion can have a direct impact on human health. In an age of the media circus, where a person is judged by the looks, one tends to compromise on the health front, without compromising on the hotness front; especially women more prone to fall prey to fashion fads. The purpose of this paper is to discuss and draw attention people towards their unhealthy wearing fashion items and its bad impact on health.

Keywords: high fashion fads, women, health, disease

Introduction

Fashion has played an important role in our health, particularly within females, throughout history (e.g., remember the story of how during the Victorian era the corsets the women wore affected their spine and lung capacity), and it remains such today. It has always been seen that in women's their back problems come from the clothes and accessories they wear. Many items in their wardrobe are not as harmless as they may seem.

The connection comes as fashion choices can have an impact on human wellbeing, both negative and positive.

Fashion and mental health: the good, the bad, the ugly

Fashion has a lot to do with empowering women and making them feel good about themselves.

In an article published in the *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, the authors write that there is a symbolic meaning of clothes, both from a personal perspective and from other people.

For example, if a man has wore a suit he will feel more confident about his career? And will people instantly take a more professional stand because he's in a suit?

If you are dressed in a little black dress you'll feel sexy and elegant, will you be approached as such?

On the other hand, we have the socio-cultural attitude toward appearance which is often derived from magazines and can have an effect on body dissatisfaction.

As a consequence, we have an interrelationship of negative body image perception and depression, which can result in susceptibility to eating disorders, a common problem in the fashion industry.

The thorny road to size zero

The Council of Fashion Designers of America reacted to the "overwhelming concern about whether some models are unhealthily thin."

They called for increasing awareness about eating disorder symptoms and decided to send a powerful message on fashion shows where they'll not choose size zero models. Still, the war has just begun and this is only the first battle.

Many women, even teenagers, look up to super skinny models and find it hard to embrace their body figures.

That's why they turn to unhealthy fad diets and "miracle" weight-loss products.

While some of these diets and magic pills can get you to lose weight fast, the pounds come back even faster, and with health consequences as a side dish.

Many of the women and men who turn to such ways for losing weight fail to understand that the best way to get to healthy appearance (not size zero) is to stick to a balanced diet and exercise.

You can use natural supplements, teas, and so-called super foods for effective weight loss management and optimal muscle gain if that is your goal.

Here are some things which consider standard in fashion but hurt our health:

Tight pants

Often people buy jeans that highlight curves, wearing ridiculously tight or skinny jeans due to the effect of compression cause many problems including poor blood circulation, dilated veins, and even slow digestion is often linked to nerve impairments and yeast infections. The butt-squeezing, thigh-hugging denim favored by hipsters across the city can cause nerve damage if too tight. Tingling and numbness are symptoms of the condition meralgia paresthetica that occurs when the nerve that runs down the front of the thigh is compressed and pain in the thighs.

Often men seen twisted their testicles due to wearing jeans that are far too tight," believes UK television personality Dr. Hilary Jones who is also a medical expert. "My advice would be to make sure you leave plenty of room around the groin area and that your pants and trousers feel comfortable so you're not being restricted in any way." [New York Daily]. Wearing very tight jeans or underwear can also lead to urinary tract infections.

High heels and health risks

Women have four times more foot problems than men do. Joint pain, calluses, ankle sprains, osteoarthritis, and nerve damage, just name few. Women who habitually wear high heels are at risk of permanent physiological damage to their

knees, hips, back and tendons -- and damage can be seen in women as young as 25 years of age.

Other than this, women who wear high heels often complain of acute lower back pain, along with other muscular deformities and sprains. Interestingly medical experts suggest that the a woman continues to walk in the same high heel stance, even after kicking off the heels, thus shortening their calf muscles and putting them at much greater mechanical strain.

According to the American Chiropractic Association, the right ways of wearing heels are:

- Choose comfortable, supportive shoes. If you want to wear high heels, bring a pair of flat shoes along with you to change into should you become uncomfortable. If you walk to work, wear flat shoes and change into your more fashionable shoes when you arrive to alleviate any pain or discomfort.
- If you insist on heels, try a 2" or less heel height. You may be surprised at how good they look and how much more comfortable they feel.
- If the shoe is uncomfortable while standing, chances are it will not be any more comfortable while walking. The wrong shoe can affect the body's center of gravity.
- While sitting, whether or not you are wearing heels, it is important to take frequent stretch breaks to alleviate weakness and tightness of the hamstring muscles.
- Keep your family chiropractor's number close at hand. Even if you aren't feeling pain at the moment, your chiropractic doctor can help you stay that way – pain free – especially if you wear heels frequently

Thongs

Wearing thongs can lead to serious intimate health problems this piece of underwear cause vaginal infections, hemorrhoids, irritation, and skin chafing in the genital area. Try not to wear thongs very often, especially in summer. If you do, choose 100% cotton.

Heavy earrings and necklaces

According to recent studies, 20% of all ear piercings develop a bacterial infection. Plus, if a procedure was carried out incorrectly, it can lead to the spread of infection in the future and put your life at risk. The use of large and heavy earrings often causes damaged earlobes, a problem that requires plastic surgery to be fixed.

The same thing with necklaces, a heavy one can cause neck pain and even difficult-to-treat contractures.

Ties

Women are not the only ones who suffer from their clothes. According to a Cornell University study, 67% of men buy shirts that are smaller than their necks.

As a result, small shirts and tight tie knots reduce blood circulation, increase intraocular pressure, cause headaches, limit neck movement, and increase muscle tension in the back and shoulders.

Poorly fitted bras

The wrong bra size or poorly fitted bras can cause numerous problems such as back, shoulder, and spinal pain.

Every time you buy a bra, try it on before leaving the store. If you have big breasts, avoid wearing bras with thin straps. If you have a smaller bust, make sure that the metals under wires don't damage your skin.

Flip-flops

Wearing flip-flop at beach can cause scrapes on feet that can be easily infected despite being an essential accessory for the beach, flip-flops are not as safe as think. Moreover, being very flat, flip-flops make heels hit the ground with more force which can end up causing discomfort and back pain

Shape wear

A tight girdle can cause shortness of breath, muscle pain, and blood circulation problems.

Always choose the right size for you, and look for shape wear made with Lycra to provide an adequate balance of support, compression, and comfort.

Extra-large handbags

Often woman seen that most they like to fill their handbag with everything they could possibly need. However, carrying too much weight on one shoulder can lead to bad posture, stiffening of the neck severe headaches and also muscular tension.

If you can't give up your favorite XXL handbag, try not to fill it with unnecessary stuff. Just the things you really need.

Pencil skirts

Pencil skirts, or pipe skirts, bring legs too close to each other, so it's always a possibility of losing balance and falling. It also limits all movements, from walking to getting into the car, but the worst thing is that such skirts can cause muscle strains and knee malformations.

Hair color and its health effects

Coloring hair with a bad quality hair dye can have detrimental effects on hair. Signs of a mild reaction can be irritation to the upper eyelids or the rims of ears and in some unfortunate and extreme cases; it can affect the whole head or body. Boxed, chemical hair dyes marketed as 'natural,' typically do not contain resorcinol, ammonia or peroxide. Make sure you are using a deep conditioner or products specific to dyed hair in order to keep your hair color hale and hearty. Semi-permanent color stains your hair shaft and covers gray hair, but fades after six to eight shampoos, and is best avoided.

An Indian women's health is also deeply impacted by the obsession with fair skin and use of fairness creams as some of these contain mercury and have been in the news for all the bad reasons.

Accessories can be unhealthy too

Wearing mini-pancake sized earrings can harm you in more ways than one. Wearing jumbo jet-sized earrings can actually tear through your ear lobe, which can only be reversed by cosmetic surgery.

Extreme eye makeup and its health effects

Kajal and Surma are traditional Indian ingredients used to enhance the shape of the eyes. However, using a bad quality or brand Kajal can lead to conjunctivitis - chemical, toxic and infective, allergy, toxicity / chemical reaction, meibomitis, corneal ulcer - which can potentially lead to blindness, uveitis - certain chemicals in kajal can incite inflammation inside the

eye, glaucoma - some constituents can increase eye pressure leading to glaucoma and conjunctively discoloration.

Always make sure to remove kajal meticulously at the end of the day. Make sure that you don't use any eye makeup, during the period of any eye infection, injury, or surgery. Change your cosmetics too after every 6 months, i.e. before they expire.

Conclusion

The issues of body image, trend, body shape and size on clothing selection and fashion consumption are important in today's society, especially among image conscious females. This study underscores that celebrities and other role models have a major impact on consumer choices and buying behavior. It is important to note that today's savvy fashion consumers' attitudes towards what is considered suitable and worthwhile are heavily steered by their psychological preferences.

References

1. Evans, Caitlin. Fashion and Health, 2018/ Exploring the Relationship. <https://www.fashionambitions.com/2018/fashion/fashion-and-health-exploring-the-relationship/>. Accessed August 30, 2019.
2. Kohli, Mansi. Side effects of high fashion on your health, 2015. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/health-fitness/health-news/Side-effects-of-high-fashion-on-your-health/articleshow/15251684.cms>. Accessed August 20, 2019.
3. Bright Side. 10 Fashion Items That Secretly Damage Your Health. <https://brightside.me/inspiration-health/10-fashion-items-that-secretly-damage-your-health-320210/>. Accessed September 5, 2019
4. Kumar Rajeev. Prospects of Sustainable Fashion Design Innovation. International Journal of Textile and Fashion Technology. 2017; 7:5-14. 10.24247/ijftdec20172.
5. Fookes C, B Pharm. Current Fashion Trends That May Affect Your Health. <https://www.drugs.com/slideshow/fashion-trends-health-1093>, 2019.