

1135-J1-1709

**M. Leigh Lunsford\*** (lunsfordml@longwood.edu), **JoEllen G. Pederson** and **Marcus H. Pendergrass**. *Body Image in Popular Culture: A Comparison of Body Mass Index (BMI) among Celebrities, Students, and Superheroes*. Preliminary report.

Sociologists and psychologists have studied the effects of unrealistic media representations of body images on appearance and self-satisfaction with appearance. Their research argues that women feel their bodies do not meet the standards of physical attractiveness, athleticism, and body slenderness highlighted in popular culture. Is there statistical evidence that women are portrayed more unrealistically than men in popular culture? How does this portrayal compare to the body types of ordinary men and women? Interestingly, there is little existing research using BMI to make these comparisons. We will discuss our methodology using BMI, including its strengths and weaknesses, and the robustness of our results, which suggest there is indeed an unrealistic portrayal of women's bodies in popular culture. This research has also resulted in a project we now give our second semester statistics students. They compare their BMI to that of celebrities and superheroes using several basic statistical methods, including the two-sample t-test and one and two-way ANOVA. We have found that while students are generally aware of the pressure to conform to body images as portrayed in popular culture, they have not had the evidence to support their feelings or understand this issue statistically. (Received September 24, 2017)