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TELEVISION, DISORDERED EATING, AND YOUNG WOMEN IN FIJI:
NEGOTIATING BODY IMAGE AND IDENTITY
DURING RAPID SOCIAL CHANGE

ABSTRACT. Although the relationship between media exposure and risk behavior among youth is established at a population level, the specific psychological and social mechanisms mediating the adverse effects of media on youth remain poorly understood. This study reports on an investigation of the impact of the introduction of television to a rural community in Western Fiji on adolescent ethnic Fijian girls in a setting of rapid social and economic change. Narrative data were collected from 30 purposively selected ethnic Fijian secondary school girls via semi-structured, open-ended interviews. Interviews were conducted in 1998, 3 years after television was first broadcast to this region of Fiji. Narrative data were analyzed for content relating to response to television and mechanisms that mediate self and body image in Fijian adolescents. Data in this sample suggest that media imagery is used in both creative and destructive ways by adolescent Fijian girls to navigate opportunities and conflicts posed by the rapidly changing social environment. Study respondents indicated their explicit modeling of the perceived positive attributes of characters presented in television dramas, but also the beginnings of weight and body shape preoccupation, purging behavior to control weight, and body disparagement. Response to television appeared to be shaped by a desire for competitive social positioning during a period of rapid social transition. Understanding vulnerability to images and values imported with media will be critical to preventing disordered eating and, potentially, other youth risk behaviors in this population, as well as other populations at risk.

KEY WORDS: body image, eating disorders, Fiji, modernization

INTRODUCTION

Eating disorders—once more prevalent in postindustrialized and Westernized societies—now have global distribution. Moreover, population studies demonstrate that transnational migration, modernization, and urbanization are associated with elevated risk of disordered eating among girls and young women (Anderson-Fye and Becker 2004). Despite advances in treatment, up to 50% of individuals with eating disorders do not recover fully (Keel and Mitchell 1997). Similarly, primary prevention programs have not yet yielded strategies for achieving sustained behavioral change in young women that would protect them from an eating disorder. This is undoubtedly tied to the complex and multitiered ways in which the social environment underpins the values and behaviors that contribute to risk. On the other hand, there has been great interest in how media imagery may be one means by which sociocultural context impacts risk. To this end, a more nuanced understanding of the pernicious nature of the impact of media exposure and its

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integration into adolescent and young adult identity is a critical intermediary step in developing effective therapeutic and preventive strategies for eating disorders across diverse populations.

The present study examines the impact of the introduction of television on ethnic Fijian adolescent girls' identity and body image in rural Fiji through narrative data collected from 30 schoolgirls in 1998, 3 years after the introduction of television to their community. A previously described cross-sectional, two-wave study demonstrated a dramatic increase in indicators of disordered eating during the 3 years following the introduction of broadcast television with Western programming to this community, a period which was also a time of rapid social and economic transition (Becker et al. 2002).

Media, teens, identity, and risk

Exposure to media imagery is known to affect adolescents and young adults profoundly; indeed, this principle is the foundation for billions of dollars investment in marketing products to these demographic groups. Part of the success of marketing to youth lies in stimulating a desire to develop—and project—a particular identity. A remunerative strategy for marketing health, beauty, and fashion products, for example, is to create an awareness of a “gap” between the consumer and the ideal, and then to promise (and sell) the solution in a product (O'Connor 2000; see also Mazzarella 2003). This strategy has become especially powerful against the backdrop of the American ethos and predilection for reshaping and cultivating the body (Becker 1995; Becker and Hamburg 1996). Whereas the producers of such media imagery and messages have argued that their products are meant as “entertainment,” vulnerable individuals unequivocally incur unintended serious adverse consequences through exposure to these images. Examples of this include the routine and gratuitous violence depicted in film, television, and music, and their amply documented effects on children (Black and Newman 1995). In addition, a growing literature suggests that media exposure has adverse effects on body image for some young women.

The complex ways in which American adolescent girls and young women embrace or resist media imagery and creatively use other cultural resources to construct their social identities are not well understood. The published medical literature on media and body image, with few exceptions (Becker et al. 2002; Richins 1991), is based on quantitative survey data. Moreover, and also with few exceptions (e.g., Rubin et al. 2003), there are almost no data available on the impact of media exposure on how girls and young women of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds construct and represent their identities. Finally, because American youth generally have had chronic and unremitting exposure to media imagery by

adolescence, conventional quantitative methodology has been unable to unpack the complex ways in which media imagery permeates identity in Western contexts.

For American youth, a distinctively postmodern ideology supports the notion that identity is created and achieved, as opposed to fixed and given. The resources for developing such an identity have increasingly shifted to extrafamilial sources, such as peer groups and media imagery. Moreover, the means of projecting personal identity have gradually shifted from mind and character to an increasingly visual and consumeristic focus (Lasch 1979). Indeed, young women (and likely young men) learn at an early age that identity can be projected through visual props and thus manipulated in a variety of ways, so that identity representation is more likely to be directed at “seeming” rather than “being” (Bourdieu 1984). Clinical experience suggests that young women may be especially vulnerable to the illusion that the self can be reshaped and remade. Unfortunately, the consequences of this culturally sanctioned illusion include body and self-disparagement, poor self-esteem, and the demoralization of women (Becker and Hamburg 1996). Moreover, there may be a serious adverse impact on mental and physical health, potentially resulting in risk-taking behavior (Klein et al. 1993) and eating disorder symptoms.

Identity, body image, and consumer culture

Consumer culture and media imagery have a pervasive and powerful influence on girls at a critical developmental stage; American girls are socialized to cement and signal identity through visual symbols that include visible consumption of prestige goods or a particular body presentation that conforms to cultural aesthetic ideals. The concept of *identity* used here is not a developmental one, but rather follows the social constructionist conceptualization of identity being “something that has to be routinely created and sustained in the reflexive activities of the individual” (Giddens 1991). Put another way, identity in this sense is “co-constructed” by the local social world in such a way that individuals draw heavily on cultural resources and symbols to construct, understand, and represent who they are (McKinley 1997). The project of defining and depicting an identity in contemporary Western culture has increasingly centered on a visual focus that depends on the use of material props. This, in turn, provides much of the standard fuel driving consumer culture, wherein status is conflated with possessing and displaying prestige goods (Featherstone 1991). The Western, postmodern “self-identity” is then arguably very much constructed as a process of competitively positioning oneself through the savvy manipulation of cultural symbols—e.g., by displaying consumption of material goods or inscribing or adorning the body in culturally salient ways. Examples of this span many ages and include the increasing use of tattooing and body-piercing as markers of personal identity (Sweetman 2000) and the 1980s and

1990s phenomenon of constructing a professional self through “power dressing” (Entwhistle 1997).

There are several reasons to believe that adolescence places girls at particular risk as participants in consumer culture. For instance, many have suggested that adolescence is a time when American girls are challenged by simultaneous conflicting cultural demands to maintain both a trajectory of achievement and the requirements of female roles; such conflict, if severe and unresolved, may manifest in a variety of difficulties, including an eating disorder (Gordon 2000; Pipher 1994). When girls entering adolescence experience the prevailing cultural pressure to *please* and to *seem* (Pipher 1994), they look to the media as a guide to their self-presentation. In distinction to societies in which status is overtly *ascribed*, the freewheeling license to create and/or remake the self is especially appealing within the American frame of opportunity and achievement. The popular illusion of equal economic and social opportunity has attached itself to the culturally peculiar notion of the body’s plasticity as well. That is, girls are socialized to believe that they can reconfigure their bodies (with enough “hard work”) in ways that invariably lead to disappointment and all too often, self-loathing (Becker and Hamburg 1996).

Media exposure and risk for violent and risky behaviors

The association between media exposure and violence is unequivocal. Numerous studies have documented the relationship between violence viewed on television and aggressive behavior (Paik and Comstock 1994; Wood and Wong 1991), which may have socially hazardous (Centerwall 1992) as well as psychologically harmful consequences. This impact on children is believed to be mediated in part by imitation of what is depicted on television (Black and Newman 1995). In addition, substantial evidence links television viewing (as well as radio, movies, music videos) to adolescent engagement in risky behaviors (e.g., sexual activity, alcohol use, cannabis use, and tobacco use) (Altman et al. 1996; Anonymous 1995; Centerwall 1992). Similarly, the mechanism by which media encourage risky behaviors is thought to be the provision of “culturally normative behavioral models” that justify the behaviors (Klein et al. 1993).

Media exposure and risk for disordered eating and poor body image

Media exposure has also been implicated in enhancing risk for the development of an eating disorder, although this has received far less attention in the pediatric and public health literature. Much of the literature and theory on how cultural context promotes risk for disordered eating and poor body image has emphasized how social pressures to be thin (generated and sustained in large part via media imagery) are internalized and thereby contribute to body dissatisfaction and, ultimately,

disordered eating in vulnerable individuals (Garner et al. 1980; Stice et al. 1996; Striegel-Moore et al. 1986). One means by which exposure to idealized images of beauty has an impact on body image is through stimulating social comparison (Festinger 1954) and body dissatisfaction (Heinberg and Thompson 1992). Indeed, numerous observational and experimental studies have demonstrated an association between reported media exposure and changes in body image (e.g., Abramson and Valene 1991; Field et al. 1999; Harrison and Cantor 1997; Irving 1990; Richins 1991; Stice and Shaw 1994; Tiggemann and Pickering 1996). However, there is little understanding of what renders media images so compelling a model for vulnerable individuals (Becker and Hamburg 1996), and the actual ways girls experience and use media images (and the ultimate impact on body image and dissatisfaction or disordered eating) are not yet sufficiently well understood for potentially effective interventions to be developed. Finally, the ways in which girls and women might respond to media images and media-promulgated values in diverse social contexts are inadequately understood. However, Western-identified images and products may be especially powerful in non-Western contexts precisely because of their perceived "exclusivity" (Mazzarella 2003).

METHODS

Study design and data collection

The impact of television exposure and social transition on body image and social identity among ethnic Fijian schoolgirls was investigated with open-ended, semi-structured interviews via a cross-sectional design. A sample of 30 subjects was purposively selected (for maximal variety) from a study population of 65 self-identified ethnic Fijian adolescent girls enrolled in forms five through seven (mean age 16.9 years) in two secondary schools in Nadroga, Fiji, from July to August of 1998. Nadroga is a province in Western Viti Levu, the largest island of the Fiji group. The schools are both located within a 15–20 minute drive from a town with a population of approximately 8000, and also include boarders from more rural areas. This cohort of schoolgirls had already been recruited for the second wave of a two-wave cohort study assessing the impact of television exposure on disordered eating attitudes and behaviors in Nadroga, Fiji, after they had been exposed to television for 3 years. Specific research questions centered on whether (and how) exposure to Western television in the context of concomitant rapid social and economic transition has stimulated changes in body image and disordered eating despite local cultural practices that have traditionally supported robust appetites and body shapes. Interviews were conducted in English (the formal language of instruction since the third grade) by an American research assistant experienced in assessing disordered eating symptoms and facilitated by a Fijian research

assistant from the Nadroga area. Written assent was obtained from subjects and a written informed consent obtained from a corresponding parent or guardian. Interviews were audiotaped, subsequently transcribed, and analyzed to extract illustrations of the ways identity and body image were being shaped by television viewing as well as ways in which girls appeared to be integrating images, ideas, and values introduced by television into their strategies for managing social change. The research was approved by both the Harvard Medical School Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects and the Fiji Research Committee.

Study site

Fiji is an archipelago of over 300 islands on the geographic and cultural border of Melanesia and Polynesia. Slightly greater than half of the population (393,000) is of ethnic Fijian (indigenous Pacific Islander) origin. Fiji was selected as a study site because of the recent (1995) introduction of television to this relatively media-naïve population. Moreover, a variety of traditional cultural norms and social mechanisms strongly support robust appetites and body shapes in the ethnic Fijian population. For instance, the importance of food presentation and feasts as facilitators of social exchange and networks supports consumption of relatively calorie-dense foods. Even routine meals are accompanied by somewhat extraordinary efforts by hosts or family to encourage appetites, including a noteworthy frequency of pro forma and quite genuine entreaties to eat heartily (e.g., “*kana, mo urouro*,” or, “eat, so you will become fat”) (Becker 1995). In addition, similar to other Pacific Island populations (Gill et al. 2002; Pollock 1995), robust bodies were traditionally considered aesthetically pleasing. In Fiji, this was in part because a large body reflected both the capability for hard work and also indexed care and nurturing from a dense social network (Becker 1994).

Finally, there is no indigenous illness category in Fiji corresponding to any eating disorder described in the DSM-IV. Moreover, prior to the 1990s, anorexia and bulimia nervosa were thought to be rare or nonexistent among ethnic Fijians (Becker 1995). However, two locally defined syndromes among the indigenous population, *macake* (a syndrome chiefly characterized by appetite loss) and ‘going thin’—both without a Western nosologic correlate—reflect an enormous social concern with appetite and a fear of weight loss. Thus, in contrast to societies in which pressures to slim are perceived to be an important context for disordered eating behavior, Fijian girls have not conventionally been motivated to reshape their bodies through diet or exercise (Becker 1995; Becker and Hamburg 1996). Possibly more protective against eating disorders than the absence of social pressure to be thin in Fiji was the fact that Fijians traditionally were not motivated to reshape their bodies. That is, whereas they expressed admiration for the aesthetic appeal of certain body features (most notably, large calves and a body that is *jubu*

vina, or robust), they did not typically express interest in nor focus efforts toward attaining the culturally ideal shape (Becker 1995; Becker and Hamburg 1996).

Notwithstanding this traditional context, previously reported data from a cross-sectional, two-wave cohort study demonstrated an increase in disordered eating attitudes and behaviors among ethnic Fijian schoolgirls between 1995 (when television was introduced) and 1998 (Becker et al. 2002). Analysis of the narrative data from this study revealed that a majority of study subjects felt that television had influenced attitudes toward body shape and weight in this peer group. Many subjects explicitly indicated a desire to emulate television characters; for some individuals, this appeared to be related to the perception that career goals could be enhanced by this route (Becker et al. 2002). This was a somewhat unexpected finding, given the traditional Fijian disinterest in personal investment in reshaping the body. Hence, the present study seeks to explore in greater detail the ways in which the girls responded to television in the context of rapid economic and social change in Fiji through a secondary data analysis.

The observed changes likely have many antecedents, which include concrete and ideological ramifications of modernization throughout the Pacific. For example, obesity is becoming increasingly prevalent across Pacific populations (Gill et al. 2002). In Fiji, this is in part likely due to increased consumption of processed foods (National Food and Nutrition Centre 2001) and availability of motorized transportation. As obesity has begun to be identified as a serious public health issue in Fiji and throughout the Pacific, new attention has been drawn to medical risks associated with overweight and personal responsibility for controlling it (Snowden and Schultz 2001). This indeed may have influenced the shift away from a relatively passive and self-accepting stance toward body shape (Becker et al. in press.).

The partial electrification of rural Fiji that began in the mid-1980s has been accompanied by relatively rapid economic, political, and social changes. For example, as a cash economy has gradually replaced the preexisting subsistence agriculture economy (with extended families growing the root crops that are the dietary staple), there has been increasing pressure for youth to find wage-earning jobs, in distinction to the recent past, when the expectation was that youth would either be engaged in domestic duties and/or work on the family plantation. With increasing opportunities for wage-earning and the stimulation of consumerism by advertising and other exposure to Western lifestyles through television, the acquisition of prestige consumer goods (mostly electric appliances such as refrigerators, television sets, and radios) is now becoming more possible and common in Fiji. With the traditional economy fairly dependent on informal and formal distribution of resources, the current generation finds itself without consumer-experienced role models for navigating this new social environment.

RESULTS

Televised imagery appears to have engaged the imagination of Fijian youth at multiple levels, apparently operating synergistically with the sweeping and rapid social changes taking place in Fiji over the past two decades. The ensuing changes in self and body image were multifaceted. On the most superficial and concrete level, television appeared to redefine local aesthetic ideals for bodily appearance and presentation. Television scenarios also appeared to stimulate desire to acquire elements of the lifestyles portrayed, including the body shape perceived to be best suited for obtaining a job. Subjects explicitly reported modeling behavior and appearance on television characters. Indeed, role modeling of television characters appeared to conflate moral virtues, success in job opportunities, and appearance. On a subtle but palpable level, study subjects indicated that television characters, appearances, and values portrayed on television provided an anchor for identity as well as competitive social positioning in a rapidly evolving social landscape. For some of the subjects, the newly introduced pressures to reshape their bodies and compete for employment appear to have fostered disordered eating. Excerpted interview data that follow illustrate major themes concerning subjects' responses to television.

Redefinition of body ideals and development of an ethos of body cultivation

"I see the ads in the television, and I admire their fitness, their sizes." (S-61)¹
"[N]owadays we watch TV, and some creams [are advertised . . .].
We can change, change our body." (S-16)

Frequent comments admiring the appearance of television characters centered on their thinness and their apparel (see Becker et al. 2002). Especially striking were the comments that reflected the girls' motivation to reshape their bodies and the acceptance that individuals have the ability to pursue this—not at all indigenous concepts. Specifically, the notion of increasing physical activity for weight control was linked to television commercials advertising exercise equipment. In addition, the concept of modifying diet gained unprecedented popularity in this community. These changes are particularly notable given the stability of previous traditions concerning bodily aesthetics (Becker 1995). The following excerpts from interviews illustrate the validation of imported body ideals and the emerging Fijian adolescent endorsement of remaking the body. For example, one young woman remarked, "[I like how] they look nice, the way they always have the figure and all. I mean, they look a bit tall and thin, not that very fat" (S-48). Another respondent said,

Some of my friends, when they watch TV², when they see one actor, they want to look like that actor. They lose weight, and um some of them gain more weight. And that's how my friends are affected by watching the TV. (S-59)

Several other respondents reflected on how visual images on television motivated girls in their peer group to reshape themselves.

S: [TV influenced] Fijians into trying to change their body. And they, they're doing things to make their body look attractive, especially getting slim.

I: Do you think television has affected your attitudes about your body or how much you care about your body?

S: It has led me to try to get slim also and watching the type of food I eat. (S-46)

I: Do you ever wish that you could be more like them [television characters]?

S: Yes very much, [*laughs*] because they look so sexy, and I know they look nice.

I: What makes them sexy?

S: The way they, the way they act in the television, I like it.

I: Have you ever done anything to be more like them?

S: Uh-huh. [*laughs*] I think so. [*laughs*] Well ah, I used to go into the town and look for some clothes that fits me that I think they, which I can compare to the ones I see on television, you know, and I take them home. [. . .] I have to act like them, and I have to see myself in the mirror, that's all. That's how I do it.

I: Do you ever, do you think that watching TV or videos has affected how you feel about the way you look?

S: Yes, I think so. Well ah, I just see those ones who are on the television, and the way that they look, I want to be like them.

I: Do you think that watching TV or videos has affected the way you feel about your body or your weight?

S: Yes, very much. I have, ah, you know, when I see them I think that I have to lose weight. (S-20)

There was also evidence that the redefined aesthetic ideals were embodied and identified in peers they wished to emulate:

I: How do [your parents] want you to look?

S: Um, they want me to look like um some attractive women nowadays. That they dressed, dress beautiful, that they dress very nice, and beautiful for their hair cuts and their weight. They're so slim and tall from having, they just imagine that I look like I can be like them. So they are very possibly, like, looking at my weight.

I: They hope you will become like those women?

S: Yes.

I: And how about you? Do you want to become like those women or do you want to become different?

S: I want to become those women. That they are very slim and tall, that I'm losing my weight, that I'm trying to be like them. (S-24)

In addition, interview data were noteworthy for multiple references to television commercials that featured exercise equipment. It appears that the aggressive marketing of fitness equipment promoted an ethos of body cultivation among the respondents. The following interview excerpts illustrate the effects of such advertising.

Well, American television, I think that is, I mean they are the best, cause they are introducing [. . .] a modern technology in order to lose our weight, and also I think they give

modern advertisements on how we should lose our weight, like exercising and all those, and the type of food that they introduce on the advertisements. I think that is good. (S-62)

This study participant also observed that exercise equipment was increasingly popular among her peers: “Well, most of the women, most of the Fijian houses I’ve been visiting, they got that kind of equipment that they’re introducing, like Fast Track and Fast Rider.” All this resulted in her wishing to join in, as evidenced in her comment: “I really just want myself to be like that. I feel like owning one equipment like that.”

Other comments resonated with the desire to purchase exercise equipment advertised on television.

I mean [TV] has shown how to become thin [. . .] I mean the machines and all how to get thin. They always show in the TV and I always see. (S-48)

When they, when they show exercising [on TV], I mean exercising shows, and then I feel that I should be like that, I should lose my weight. (S-16)

On the subject of exercise equipment, another young woman noted her motivation to obtain exercise equipment, inspired by television:

[TV] affect[s] me because sometimes I feel fat, and I usually encourage my mom to buy, I should, at this point every day, I should be at home and use the Power Rider for losing some weight at home. (S-34)³

The eagerness to acquire a piece of exercise equipment for the household—an obvious parallel to the enthusiastic purchase of television sets during the same period—is in one respect remarkable, given the cost relative to the disposable income, but in another respect a completely predictable response to the desire that the ads stimulated.

Identity and roadmaps: Navigating unfamiliar social terrain

“I have to look at what they’re doing and cram so that I can become one of them.” (S-26)

“[C]ulture in Fiji normally accepts women here as big, heavy. In the TV, the women are thin, so it has [affected cultural traditions in Fiji].” (S-58)

Generally, adolescent respondents in this study were quite forthcoming about their admiration for and desire to emulate characters portrayed on television. In some surprising ways, they frequently appeared to identify with characters on television. Although their expressed admiration was not restricted to appearance, commentary about thinness, hairstyles, and dress was the most prominent. In addition, however, respondents noted other characteristics of television characters that they admired or wished to emulate. For example, several indicated an interest in the character Xena from the show *Xena, Warrior Princess*, because of her physical strength and embodiment of female ability to equal men. Others singled

out characters who were focused on helping others—a trait very much related to more traditional Fijian values. Frequently, respondents made clear their strategy to model themselves on television characters. They referred to their changing local world and benefits to learning about global culture from these characters. Indeed, it became clear from these interview data that adolescent girls were using television to map out pathways to employment.

The following interview excerpt illustrates this point:

I: What do you think of American TV?

S: I uh, in the American TV, I think it's good because it give us uh, information and uh, it always [helps] us to, to see what [things are going on] around in our, in our world today. I think it's good to watch American TV.

I: What show or shows do you like the best?

S: Uh, only the uh, Shortland Street and uh, and uh, and news that come in the world. World news.

I: Why do you like these shows?

S: Uh, because us, it help me in my, it help me in my future and it always it almost help me to know what it's going on around the world 'cause [. . .] in the TV so we can see what it is happening around the world and it can teach us uh, many lesson. (S-23)

Yes. It's really affects the way that I look. Sometimes we copy the, like for example on the TV, we are copying what, what is being advertised, we copy it and try to show it to our friends. (S-24)

Others further indicated that television was having a sweeping and generally positive effect on ethnic Fijians.

S: [TV] teaches us, uh it teaches us some kind of, of the other worlds that we don't know about America.

I: Which shows do you like the best? What programs do you like the best?

S: *Beverly Hills*.

I: Why do you like that show?

S: Because it teaches me what I should do, and what I should not do.

I: In what terms? In what ways, what you should do how? [. . . In what way] do you mean that?

S: Ah, about my future, life, what is good and what is bad about [the] future. (S-26)

[The characters on television,] they're very marvelous. They're very nice. They really look good. They very, they showing us [. . .] the way, they're very happy. They're helping me, and they're helping other people as well. They change our lifestyle. (S-64)

In addition to indicating their use of television as a general guide to life, subjects frequently expressed concrete admiration for the appearance of specific television characters. Perhaps this is best expressed in the latter respondent's explanation for the impact of television characters on her feelings about her appearance: "[. . .] I want to be like them. I want to be just like those people." The dimensions most important to her centered on appearance, weight, and self-presentation as

she listed “[t]heir weight, the way they dress up, the way they eat, and the way they talk” as the aspects that she perceived had most affected her. Another subject commented that the widespread emulation of television characters’ “eating habits and styles, of clothing styles” stemmed from the girls “trying to practice what they see on TV and videos” (S-61).

Interestingly, character and physical qualities of television characters were sometimes conflated, as in the following two excerpts:

Well, I just want to be like her [Xena]. Like the actions that she takes, and also sometimes she makes decisions. I mean, even the old man and the adults have to listen to her, so I really want myself to be like that. And also, I like the look of her body, the shape of her body sometimes I really want myself to be like her [. . .]. (S-62)

[I admire] Xena cause she’s a woman, and she can fight more with a—especially with the tall, the giants, you know? And she killed a man, like in some of the men, they come in and try to make uh, to fight against her, but she is Xena. She tried her best to kill them, cause she is a woman and she’s, but you know like that is, men, they think that they do things, but look what the men can do, girls can do too. (S-50)

Whereas the latter study participant reported her friends’ admiration for the “Xena” character based on her modeling of gender parity, she indicated that the television show motivated her to emulate Xena’s figure: “when Xena started, from there I started to change my, I lose weight” (S-50).

Competitive social positioning

“And those kinds of [fat and short] people too, they are not, they don’t have jobs because of their weight, and I mean the way they ate and all.” (S-48)

Interview respondents often intimated that their emulation of television characters was strategically motivated by a desire to position themselves competitively vis-à-vis their peers. It is noteworthy here that competition and achievement are not traditionally sanctioned values among ethnic Fijians, although explicit references to competition were made by some of the subjects. Indeed, traditional Fijian culture has not supported upward social mobility, and aspirations to higher education and social pretensions were often actively criticized and discouraged. Thus, it appears that television content as well as new opportunities for social and economic advancement may have stimulated this discourse. It is also possible that the questions posed precipitated—or at least brought to a more explicit level—the desire to reposition themselves. This competitive ethos was often embedded in concerns articulated about securing a good job. Related to this, several respondents indicated their perception that overeating or overweight promoted laziness—something they wished to avoid in conventional domestic responsibilities in their homes.

Illustrations of modeling on television characters to become competitive for jobs follow in interview excerpts.

I have to follow what they do [on *Shortland Street* . . .] so that I can be, I can be good in that particular jobs. (S-23)

Another young women explained how she perceived that copying actors enhanced her chances at getting a job:

The [actors] are very smart when they act. They look very beautiful and nice. The [. . .] way they speak and the way they smile and the way they act on the TV is very good. But it also taught me a lesson. (S-24)

Specifically, she reflected that “sometimes we ourselves, students, copied [actors] so we can present it to others just to show that we are really interested in such a job [. . .].” She concluded by saying that the compelling reason to emulate television characters was “to become successful in whatever I want” (S-24).

In some cases, respondents were in fact quite pragmatic in their wish to lose weight to compete for particular jobs. For example, the following three young women talked about their perception (possibly quite accurate) that achieving a slim figure was requisite to obtaining the sought-after position of flight attendant on Air Pacific.

I wanted to lose my weight because I am looking for my future depending on my career what type of career I want, so I want to lose my weight such a job and sometimes you become fat we are not suited for that kind of career or that kind of job that we want. Like for example, uh, flight attendants [. . .] we could see that they are, they are slim and tall and very thin. From there I can figure it out that I want to lose my weight because of my career, career, career. (S-24)

[I want to lose weight] because I don't want to become fat, and your fat leads to obesity. And before just because of my mission, I wanted to become an air hostess, and I wanted to lose weight. [. . .] And you know air hostess, they want people who are tall and thin, and not that fat. (S-48)

[B]ecause I'm too fat, I'm not too happy. [. . .] when I leave school, I want to become flight attendant so I think the most important thing is my weight. So I have to cut it down [. . .]. (S-46)

Interest in television characters as role models for success in finding jobs was not restricted to appearance. For example, one respondent commented that she admired Scully, a character from the *X-Files* because of both her courage and her success in her employment. She said she wanted to be more like this character because, “I want to have a good job like her and, ah, and to have a better future” (S-16). In addition, there was widespread admiration for the character Xena from *Xena, Warrior Princess*. As noted above, generally Xena was admired for her abilities, not just her figure, and some girls said they liked her because she was powerful and represented the possibility that women could work.

[...] I'm a girl and Xena's a girl, so I support Xena because she's very brave and ... because we often say that men are brave and not women. [...] because I have two brothers I have to fight sometimes and say, "Oh look at us girls. We are brave and we are tougher than you boys. Look at you defending those boys. And those boys are just weak and Xena is much braver, so you boys are of no use. Because just in order to fight with my, to pass with my small brothers because they often say that boys are better than girls. But now at least we know that boys and girls are equal. Men and women are equal. (S-64)

However, it was clear from others' comments that social and economic success was conflated with a slim figure, as in the following two excerpts:

[T]he actresses and all those girls, especially those European girls, I just like, I just admire them and want to be like them. I want their body, I want their size. I want myself to be in the same position as they are. (S-64)

[S]ometimes we can see on TV ... teenagers and they are very slim. They are the same ages but they are working, they are slim and they are very tall and they are cute, nice, so from there we want ourselves or we want our bodies to become like that. So we try to maintain our weight, try to lose a lot of weight to become more like them. (S-24)

In addition to their explicit awareness of using television as a resource for guidance in succeeding and thriving in Fiji's evolving cash economy, several respondents talked more explicitly about perceived social competition. Although Fijian society was traditionally one in which social status was ascribed, comparison of effort and talent was, not surprisingly, commonplace. On the other hand, upward social mobility was not a realistic option. However, the girls' narratives appeared to reflect an acceptance of self-promotion and competitive social positioning. For example, in explaining what she admired about television characters, one subject commented that she admired that "They act smart; they try to advertise themselves" (S-35). Additional comments revealed an overt sense of the competition girls experienced:

[...] I think, teenagers have to lose weight, and as for teenage girl, she has to lose weight, and she has to attain a size which to be in competitive world, and to be, because in this age, teenage girls are competing with others, so we have to be like others, because many teenage girls are all fat [...] (S-64).

This young woman qualified this statement with her belief that girls did not have to be the "thinnest," but rather eat in an "average" way so as to avoid being overweight. She went on to describe why it was important to her to lose weight. It is noteworthy that she equates thinness with energy as well as social standing.

I'll lose weight firstly because of my standing. Because I want to be, in order to lose weight, when you lose weight, I think, when I lose weight I'll be active, and I'll have much energy to walk from here, to go from there and then there; to do some studying here; to do some reciting here. And also I just like to lose weight you know for my friends to like me—to be with me—because I think some of these fat girls are left out in this world because they are fat [...] (S-64)

Weight, energy, and productivity

*“I live on a farm here. Ah, I want to do more work to help my parents.
[. . . B]ecause my body’s too fat, it’s too lazy.
So I want to lose weight in order to do more work.” (S-41)*

*“When I eat less, it’s good for me, but when
I eat too much, I couldn’t do [jobs].” (S-50)*

In contrast to a striking lack of commentary about being thin to be attractive to boys, many girls discussed their opinion that maintaining a lower weight or eating less made them less “lazy.” Parallels of economic sluggishness of the social body were not explicitly made, but it is intriguing that girls frequently associated thinness with ability to work, whereas more traditionally, a strong and robust body was associated with ability to work. Illustrations follow:

Yes, my parents usually tell me to eat a small amount of food, not to eat, because when I eat a lot of food, I become lazy, sleepy. (S-7)

It’s good for my health to be, to be lose weight because I am looking in future so that I can do a lot of work so I cannot get some type of sickness when I have to do that type of work. (S-23)

I don’t feel good about [overeating] cause the eating is to get lazy. (S-56)

[My family] usually tell me to lose weight so sometimes when I’m not interested in doing some work, that’s the time when they comment some more, some more words for me and told me that “we know you’re gaining weight. It’s better for you to lose weight, cause it’s better for you to lose weight when you’re doing some work at home it’s easier for you then just gaining weight and moving slowly and not doing some work fast” [. . .]. (S-44)

This respondent and two others also tied their desire to be thin to the modeling of television characters:

[Television characters in *Xena* and *Hercules*] look fit most of the time when I look at them, so I always admire if I could be, look, fit, look like them, so it’s easy for me to move around and do work. (S-44)

No, I just want to be slim, because they [TV characters] are slim. Like it’s influencing me so much that I have to be slim. I have to be fast enough so to run around when in time of help. (S-45)

It makes me feel good because I am thin and I can do every work in the family at home, unlike fat people who are always getting lazy and feel like relaxing all the time. (S-48)

It is of note that another respondent commented that television itself interfered with productivity:

Television makes people lazy. By watching television overnight, when they wake up in the morning and they are told to go somewhere and do some work and they are very lazy and it make them create conflicts in their home by not doing anything. (S-35)

Although the concerns about overeating, overweight, and television resulting in laziness arguably flag a collective concern Fijian youth have as they wonder how Fiji will perform in the global economy, it is far from a uniform signal. That is, several girls expressed a more traditional opinion that eating and weighing more were beneficial in promoting an ability to work better, harkening back to the traditional valuation of robust body size in pre-television Fiji (Becker 1995). For example, one respondent described her ideal weight as

Thin, not that thin. Like some people who are very skinny, I don't want that. I mean a bit thin, not like very thin. I'll be thin, and I want my body to be built, bigger and strong, not that kind of thin. (S-48)

But others expressed more ambivalence in the optimal body size, very likely because aesthetic ideals and cultural meanings imbued in body shape are changing so rapidly. As an illustration, one subject said, "I feel a bit happy because uh, my parents always admire me if I lose weight, and it helps me in doing my work at home in the village" (S-35). On the other hand, the same subject also reported that her parents advised her to gain weight, saying, "we should gain weight because we can help more." Similarly, another respondent said, "fat people can't do more job at home, so that I can make myself slim so that I can do everything at home" (S-34). However, she also equated eating and weight with her ability to work in the following statement:

I feel happy more about [eating a lot of food], because I do a lot of job at home cause I'm, I'm the only girl at home. I can help my mom. [. . .] My mom can't do everything at home because she is very old so they tell me that I am heavy enough to do the job at home so I can take a lot of more food at home. (S-34)

Finally, another respondent also expressed approval of an intermediate size in describing why she wishes to resemble Xena:

Before when I, you know when I was a lot bigger and fat, you know, we can't do what Xena can do. Like, Xena, she's usually flying away. I mean, then doing some things when she goes through the air and doing such [. . .] like that. I just, myself, I want to be like that too. You know, like be, but not like a piece of paper, you know, like when the wind comes it just float away? So I just want to be like that. (S-50)

Connection to disordered eating

"I think [TV] is bad because most girls take the dieting. They end up being sick." (S-58)

Although the implications of changes in body ideals, an emerging legitimization of reshaping the body, and an influx of images and values that stimulate consumerism for fostering the emergence of body image concerns and disordered eating may be intuitive from a clinical perspective, it is by no means clear that subjects were

all explicitly aware of their use of television characters as role models. Having said that, however, the openly expressed admiration of lifestyles and body shapes portrayed on television appeared quite prevalent, and some subjects did actually connect the dots between transitioning body ideals, values, and eating pathology. Moreover, it is quite likely that some, if not much, of the interest, valuation, and admiration for characters may have been diffused throughout the peer group independently of television exposure (Becker et al. 2002) and thus affected schoolgirls both directly and indirectly. In any case, the apparent connection between comparison with television characters and a new standard they set, self-disparagement, misplaced efforts to reshape the body, and disordered eating attitudes and behaviors is a serious public health concern.

The following respondent immediately associated weight concerns and unhealthy dieting with television in the following interview excerpt:

I: What do you think of American television?

S: Um, uh about weight?

I: In general, or whatever you would like to talk about.

S: I think that they portray a lot of skinny girls and very bad, you know, a very bad eating, especially [in] Fiji.

I: Can you tell me how?

S: Uh, they tend to say that being skinny is the in thing.

I: That being skinny is the in thing?

S: Yeah.

I: Are there other ways that you think it's bad?

S: I think it's bad because most girls take the dieting. They end up being sick.

I: How, how does that happen?

S: Uh, [. . .] the diet gets uncontrollable.

I: How does a diet get uncontrollable?

S: They can't, they cannot eat, they have no appetite for eating anymore.

I: Has that happened to people you know here in Fiji?

S: Yes.

I: Are they people your age, in the schools, things like that?

S: Yeah.

I: And what happens with them. Can you tell me a little bit more about it?

S: Uh, they don't know that they start on a diet, they keep on going on a diet and they just lose their appetite and they just get really skinny and they can't get back to their normal weight. (S-58)

These comments somewhat reflect a traditional ethnic Fijian concern about appetite loss (manifest in the syndrome *macake*). This informant's model concerning the slippery slope of dieting leading to uncontrolled weight loss could as easily reflect *macake* as an eating disorder in this case.

Another respondent who discussed taking diet pills as well as restrictive eating tied her desire to lose weight to peer opinion and role models on television:

I: What do you think influences how you feel about your weight? What sort of things make you want to be thinner or like your weight? What sort of things do that? Friends, or family, or television? What sort of things?

S: My friends. They tell them that I too fat, so I want to make myself fit, slim.

I: How about your family? Does that influence how you feel about your body and your weight?

S: Yes. They encourage me to take a diet so that I can have less weight than I have now, and uh make my body slim.

I: How about television? Do you think that influences how you feel about your body?

S: Yes

I: Yeah?

S: I see ads in the television, and I admire their fitness, their sizes. (S-61)

One of the respondents who reported purging commented on how she tried to lose weight:

Most of the times when I eat, I sometimes want to vomit it out. But, most of the times I miss my meals. And sometimes I walk in the farm, very heavy walk, so I can know for myself that I am losing my weight. (S-62)

This study participant emphasized that her information on weight control came from viewing television: "I learn a lot from television. Doing those exercises, and the equipments that are being introduced" (S-62). Another respondent's comments suggested how the body disparagement so entwined with eating disorders in the West can also creep into Fijian girls' discourse.

I: Does you family ever comment on your weight?

S: Yes, when I'm too fat they comment about my weight.

I: What do they say?

S: They say that uh I'm eating too much food, and it makes me look like overweight.

I: How does it make you feel when they say that?

S: I feel like, I feel sad, and I want to cry sometimes. And uh, I don't want to feel like overweight [. . .]. (S-59)

She evidently felt demoralized by critical comments by both her family and her peers:

They [my friends] say that um I'm like an old woman, and I'm too big. [. . .] I feel sad [. . .] and um sometimes I feel like to cry because the way they talk about my weight. (S-59)

Another respondent, who said, "I think ah all those actors and actresses that they show on TV, they have a good figure and so I, I would like to be like them," also made the following comments in her interview about perceived peer pressure to lose weight:

I: Do your friends ever comment on your weight?

S: Um yeah.

I: What do they say?

S: Ah, when I wear clothes that um, that, when I wear clothes that makes me look fat, I already say that I'm fat, and they say that I should do something in order to lose weight so that I can get a slimmer figure.

I: How does it make you feel when they say that?

S: I lose hope. I lose hope when they say that.

I: Why do you lose hope?

S: Cause I always been thinking about getting slimmer and when they say that, it really makes me hopeless. (S-46)

Finally, a respondent who acknowledged having induced vomiting to lose weight described her observations on the effects of television on Fijian body image.

I: Do you think that television is making Fijians ashamed of their bodies?

S: Yeah, very much. Because Fijians are, most of us Fijians are, many of us, most, I can say most, we are brought up with those heavy foods, and our bodies are, we are getting fat. And now, we are feeling, we feel that it is bad to have this huge body. We have to have those thin, slim bodies. (S-64)

DISCUSSION

Minimally, and at the most superficial level, narrative data reflect a shift in fashion among the adolescent ethnic Fijian population studied. A shift in aesthetic ideals is remarkable in and of itself given the numerous social mechanisms that have long supported the preference for large bodies. Moreover, this change reflects a disruption of both apparently stable traditional preference for a robust body shape and the traditional disinterest in reshaping the body (Becker 1995).

Subjects' responses to television in this study also reflect a more complicated reshaping of personal and cultural identities inherent in their endeavors to reshape their bodies. Traditionally for Fijians, identity had been fixed not so much in the body as in family, community, and relationships with others, in contrast to Western-cultural models that firmly fix identity in the body/self. Comparatively speaking, social identity is manipulated and projected through personal, visual props in many Western social contexts, whereas this was less true in Fiji. Instead, Fijians have traditionally invested themselves in nurturing others—efforts that are then concretized in the bodies that one cares for and feeds. Hence, identity is represented (and experienced) individually and collectively through the well-fed bodies of others, not through one's own body (again, comparatively speaking) (Becker 1995). In addition, since Fiji's economy has until recently been based in subsistence agriculture, and since multiple cultural practices encourage distribution of material resources, traditional Fijian identity has also not been represented through the ability to purchase and accumulate material goods.

More broadly than interest in body shape, however, the qualitative data demonstrate a rather concrete identification with television characters as role models of successful engagement in Western, consumeristic lifestyles. Admiration and emulation of television characters appears to stem from recognition that traditional channels are ill-equipped to assist Fijian adolescents in navigating the landscape

of rapid social change in Fiji. Unfortunately, while affording an opportunity to develop identities syntonic with the shifting social context, the behavioral modeling on Western appearance and customs appears to have undercut traditional cultural resources for identity-making (Becker et al. 2002). Specifically, narrative data reveal here that traditional sources of information about self-presentation and public comportment have been supplanted by captivating and convincing role models depicted in televised programming and commercials.

It is noteworthy that the interest in reshaping the body differs in subtle but important ways from the drive for thinness observed in other social contexts. The discourse on reshaping the body is, indeed, quite explicitly and pragmatically focused on competitive social positioning—for both employment opportunities and peer approval. This discourse on weight and body shape is suffused with moral as well as material associations (i.e., that appear to be commentary on the social body). That is, repeatedly expressed sentiment that excessive weight results in laziness and undermines domestic productivity may reflect a concern about how Fijians will “measure up” in the global economy. The juxtaposition of extreme affluence depicted on most television programs against the materially impoverished Fijians associates the nearly uniformly thin bodies and restrained appetites of television characters with the (illusory) promise of economic opportunity and success. Each child’s future, as well as the fitness of the social body, seems to be at stake.

In this sense, disordered eating among the Fijian schoolgirls in this study appears to be primarily an instrumental means of reshaping body and identity to enhance social and economic opportunities. From this perspective, it may be premature to comment on whether or not disordered eating behaviors share the same meaning as similar behaviors in other cultural contexts. It is also premature to say whether these behaviors correspond well to Western nosologic categories describing eating disorders. Regardless of any differences in psychological significance of the behaviors, however, physiologic risks will be the same. Quite possibly—and this remains to be studied in further detail—disordered eating may also be a symbolic embodiment of the anxiety and conflict the youth experience on the threshold of rapid social change in Fiji and during their personal and collective navigation through it. Moreover, there is some preliminary evidence that the disordered eating is accompanied by clinical features associated with the illnesses elsewhere and eating disorders may be emerging in this context. Finally, television has certainly imported more than just images associating appearance with material success; it has arguably enhanced reflexivity about the possibility of reshaping one’s body and life trajectory and popularized the notion of competitive social positioning.

The impact of imported media in societies undergoing transition on local values has been demonstrated in multiple societies (e.g., Cheung and Chan 1996; Granzberg 1985; Miller 1998; Reis 1998; Tan et al. 1987; Wu 1990). As

others have argued in other contexts, ideas from imported media can be used to negotiate “hybrid identities” (Barker 1997) and otherwise incorporated into various strategies for social positioning (Mazzarella 2003) and coping with modernization (Varan 1998). Likewise and ironically, here as in elsewhere in the world (see Anderson-Fye 2004, this issue), Fijian youth must craft an identity which adopts Western values about productivity and efficiency in the workplace while simultaneously selling their Fijian-ness (an essential asset to their role in the tourist industry). Self-presentation is thus carefully constructed so as to bridge and integrate dual identities. That these identities are not consistently smoothly fused is evidenced in the ambivalence in the narratives about how thin a body is actually ideal.

The source of the emerging disordered eating among ethnic Fijian girls thus appears multifactorial and multidetermined. Media images that associate thinness with material success and marketing that promotes the possibility of reshaping the body have supported a perceived nexus between diligence (work on the body), appearance (thinness), and social and material success (material possessions, economic opportunities, and popularity with peers). Fijian self-presentation has absorbed new dimensions related to buying into Western styles of appearance and the ethos of work on the body. A less articulated parallel to admiration for characters, bodies, and lifestyles portrayed on imported television is the demoralizing perception of not comparing favorably as a population. It is as though a mirror was held up to these girls in which they perhaps saw themselves as poor and overweight. The eagerness they express in grooming themselves to be hard workers or perhaps obtain competitive jobs perhaps reflects their collective energy and anxiety about how they, as individuals, and as a Fijian people, are going to fare in a globalizing world. Thus preoccupation with weight loss and the restrictive eating and purging certainly reflect pragmatic strategies to optimize social and economic success. At the same time, they surely contribute to body- and self-disparagement and reflect an embodied distress about the uncertainty of personal future and the social body.

Epidemiologic data from other populations confirm an association between social transition (e.g., transnational migration, modernization, urbanization) and disordered eating among vulnerable groups (Anderson-Fye and Becker 2003). In particular, the association between upward mobility and disordered eating across diverse populations has relevance here (Anderson-Fye 2000; Buchan and Gregory 1984; Silber 1986; Soomro et al. 1995; Yates 1989). Exposure to Western media images and ideas may further contribute to disordered eating by first promoting comparisons that result in perceived economic and social disadvantage and then promoting the notion that efforts to reshape the body will enhance social status. It can be argued that girls and young women undergoing social transition may perceive that social status is enhanced by positioning oneself competitively through the informed use of cultural symbols—e.g., by bodily appearance and thinness

(Becker and Hamburg 1996). This is comparable to observations that children of immigrants to the U.S. (for whom the usual parental “map of experience” is lacking) substitute alternative “cultural guides” from the media as resources for negotiating successful social strategies (Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco 2001). In both scenarios, adolescent girls and young women assimilating to new cultural standards encounter a ready cultural script for comportment and appearance in the media.

CONCLUSIONS

“I’ve wondered how television is made and how the actress and actors, I always wondered how television, how people acted on it, and I’m kind of wondering whether it’s true or not.” (S-48)

The increased prevalence of disordered eating in ethnic Fijian schoolgirls is not the only story—or even the most important one—that can be pieced together from the respondents’ narratives on television and its impact.⁴ Nor are images and values transmitted through televised media singular forces in the chain of events that has led to an apparent increase in disordered eating attitudes and behaviors. The impact of media coupled with other sweeping economic and social change is likely to affect Fijian youth and adults in many ways. On the other hand, this particular story allows a window into the powerful impact and vulnerability of this adolescent female population. This story also allows a frame for exploring resilience and suggesting interventions for future research.

In some important ways, Fiji is a unique context for investigating the impact of media imagery on adolescents. In Fiji in particular, the evolving and multiple—and potentially overlapping or dissonant—social terrain presents novel challenges and opportunities for adolescents navigating their way in the absence of guidance from “conventional” wisdom and social hierarchies that may have grown obsolete in some respects. Doubtless the profound ways in which adolescent girls are influenced by media imagery extend beyond the borders of Fiji and the ways in which young women in Fiji consume and reflect on televised media may suggest mechanisms for its impact on youth in other social contexts. This study, therefore, allows insight into the ways in which social change intersects with the developmental tasks of adolescence to pose the risk of eating disorders and other youth risk behaviors.

Adolescent girls and young women in this and other indigenous, small-scale societies may also be especially vulnerable to the effects of media exposure for several key reasons. For example, in the context of rapid social change, these girls and young women may lack traditional role models for how to successfully maneuver in a shifting economic and political environment. Moreover, in societies

in which status is traditionally ascribed rather than achieved, girls and women may feel more compelled to secure their social position through a mastery of self-presentation that draws heavily from imported media. It is a logical and frightening conclusion that vulnerable girls and women across diverse populations who feel marginalized from the locally dominant culture's sources of prestige and status may anchor their identities in widely recognized cultural symbols of prestige popularized by media-imported ideas, values, and images. Further, these girls and women have no reference for comparison of the televised images to the "realities" they portray and thus to critique and deconstruct the images they see compared with girls and women who are "socialized" into a culture of viewership. Without thoughtful interventions⁵—yet to be explored with the affected communities—the unfortunate outcome is likely to be continued increasing rates of disordered eating and other youth risk behaviors in vulnerable populations undergoing rapid modernization and social transition.

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NOTES

1. Narrative excerpts are identified by subject number to preserve anonymity. In some excerpts, the interviewer's words are included to give a context for the response. In such cases, the interviewer's comments follow an "I" and the subject's comments follow an "S."

2. When television was first introduced to Fiji in 1995, the programming was chiefly situation comedies, dramatic series, and news imported from the US, Australia, and New Zealand. With the exception of some sports events, locally produced programming was limited to one 20-minute news segment aired twice daily. Study respondents favored *Melrose Place*, *Beverly Hills 90210*, *Xena, Warrior Princess* (New Zealand-produced), and *Shortland Street* (an Australian-produced dramatic series).

3. Some of the interview quotes were published previously in Becker AE, Burwell RA, Gilman SE, Herzog DB, Hamburg P. Eating behaviours and attitudes following prolonged television exposure among ethnic Fijian adolescent girls. *The British Journal of Psychiatry* 2002, 180: 509–14.

4. For example, the increased incidence of suicide and other self-injury in Fiji (Pridmore et al. 1995) may index social distress related to rapid social change.

5. Prevention efforts that might be useful include psychoeducational information about the psychological and medical risks associated with bingeing, purging, and self-starvation as well as media literacy programs that assist youth in critical and informed viewing of televised programming and commercials.

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