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Thin women find 'healthy' peers a threat

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Thin women, who are not comfortable with their bodies, consider peers with a 'healthy' weight as a threat, says a Spanish study.

Similarly, males prefer thin females more than women themselves and also find overweight females more unpleasant than reed thin women.

Researchers from the University of Granada's department of personality, evaluation and psychological treatment, found that thin women feel embarrassed and uneasy when they see themselves in a picture or video, especially if they are imitating the poses of a professional model.

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Researchers co-led by Blanca Ortega-Roldan Oliva, performed four experimental studies with university students involving 671 students, said a Granada statement.

Some 550 students participated in the first two studies (408 women and 142 men), 61 participated in the third study (28 women highly displeased with their body and 33 moderately unsatisfied with their body) and 60 in the fourth study (30 healthy women satisfied with their body and 30 women with bulimia nervosa unsatisfied with their body).

Oliva explained that the bodies most liked by men and women are those of professional female models with a normal weight.

"Men and women found these bodies highly pleasing and stimulating, although they made them feel a lack of control.

"This means that a sexy and stimulating body makes people feel a lack of control, as these bodies are considered difficult to attain or even unattainable," said Oliva.

On the other hand, the study revealed that the body of a model with a normal weight negatively affects women that are highly unsatisfied with their body.

Thus, unsatisfied women consider these bodies "unpleasant, very activating and unattainable (perception of lack of control)".

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