Media sends messages of thinness

While the appearance of waif-like models in the media may send a dangeroas message about eating disorders, general fitness and fashion magazines and television shows with thin characters also play a key role in influencing irregular eating patterns of young women, asys a University of Michigan researcher. "British model Kate Moss and other ultra-thin cultural icons of feminine beauty who have sparked much of this controversy may not be uniquely dangerous,"

sparked much of this controversy may not be uniquely dangerous," says Kristen Harrison, U-M mesistant professor of communication studies. "Instead, the overall emphasis on feminine thinness exemplified by multiple media depictions of slender models and actresses should be considered for its possible influence on disordered eating."

sible influence on disordered eating."

In survey of 232 female undergraduate students at a large Midwestern university in 1994. Harrison found that about 15 percent of the women met criteria for disordered enting—signs of anoroxia or bullmia, body dissatisfaction, a drive for thinness, perfectionism and a sense of personal ineffectiveness. The study, which appeared recently in the Journal of Communication, shows that magazine rending and television view-

ing, especially exposure to thinneas-depicting and thinness-promoting media, significantly predict symptoms of women's eating
disorders, Harrison says.

According to the study, women
who frequently read fitness magazines for reasons other than
interest in fitness and dieting
display greater signs of disordered eating than women who
rarely read them at all.

Further, reading fashion magazines, in particular, is significantly related to a woman's drive
for thinness and her disastifaction with her body, although
magazine reading, in general,
has little effect on body dissatisfaction.

Harrison says that the relationship between mass media
consumption and symptoms of
women's eating disorders
appears to be stronger for magazine reading than for television
viewing.

zine reading than for tolevision viewing.
However, watching "thin" shows is a consistent predictor of a woman's drive for thinness and viewing "heavy" shows is significantly related to body disentisfaction.
"Why does body dissatisfaction appear to be more strongly related to television viewing than magazine reading, whereas drive for thinness is more strongly related to magazine reading

than television viewing?" she said. "Similarly, why is body disatisfaction related to viewing 'heavy' shows and not 'thin shows?"
Harrison bolieves that the drive for thinness is a learned behavior that sources such as magazines explain how to achieve (for example, through dieting and exercise).
Body dissatisfaction, on the other hand, is not associated with a particular action or behavior and, instead, is a set of attitudes, not intentions.
In a related study using the same sample of women, Harrison found that an interpresenal attraction to thin media person facilities is related to disordered eating above and beyond the influence of mere exposure to media, even those that depict or promote thinness (she define interpersonal attraction as a perceived similarity to a female celebrity and a fondness for and a desire to be like the famous woman).
Being attracted to "thin" characters in shows like "Melrose Place" and "Beverly Hills 90210" positively predicts general caring-disorder symptoms — unorxia, bulimia, drive for thinges, perfectionism and ineffectiveness — whereas attraction to "average" and "heavy" media

tiveness - whereas attraction to "average" and "heavy" media

personalities do not.

"It seems clear that young women's patterns of disordered cating, including both attitudinal and behavioral tendencies, are related not only to the types of media they expose themselves to but also to the way they perceive and respond to specific mass media characters." Harrison says.

"This relationship may seem obvious to readers who are concerned with this issue and openly acknowledge the possibility that the media operate as transmitters of potentially dangerous socially desirable values and oroms.

mtters of potentially dangerous socially desirable values and norms.

"Nonetheless, it bears restating for the benefit of any members of the research community and the general public who still believe media messages to be largely ineffectual in the lives of young people.

Harrison's findings are reported in two soparate studies: "The Relationship Between Media Consumption and Eating Disorders" published in a recent issue of the Journal of Communication and "Does Interporsonal Attraction to Thin Media Personalities Promote Eating Disordors?" published in the fall 1997 issue of the Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media.

Holiday Tables offers ideas for decorating

Festive decorating ideas are displayed at Cranbrook House's Holiday Tables, beginning with the Patron Tea 2-5 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 20, in Bloomfield Hills. Tickets are \$35.

General admission daya are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday. Tickets are \$36.

General admission daya are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday. Tickets are \$10 at the door: \$8 in advance by calling (248) 645-3149; or at Harp's. Magnolias, The Townsend Hotel, or the VMCA, all in Birmingham; at Miner's in Bloomfield Hills; or at the Village Barn in Franklin.

Free parking is available in the Christ Church lot.

Safety seats often improperly secured

About a quarter of young children riding in motor vehicles on Michigan roads are not fastend in child safety seats, and of these who are, nearly 80 percent are improperly secured, according to a University of Michigan study. Data for the study was collected last summer by researchers observing motorists at 88 pediatric clinics and day care centers in Michigan's 28 most populous counties, including Oakland County.

counties, including Oakland be County.

"Great strides still need to be made to ensure the safety of children traveling in motor vehicles," says researcher David W. Eby of the U-M Transportation the Research Institute. "Our results show that drivers have fairly produced to the safety sent law, that a significant portion of the state's population is not using child safety seats. What's more, nine out of 10 children are either that is not using child safety seat that is installed incorrectly or are improperly clased in it."

In their study of more than in 1,200 children under ago 4 riding in passenger cars, pickup Ertrucks, sport utility vehicles, and vans and mini vans, Eby and colleagues Lidid P. Kestyniuk and Carl Christoff found that child casfety seat use is higher in wehicles driven by women (75 percent).

"While not surprising, these results suggest that continued efforts to increase safety belt use will also increase the frequency with which a child safety seat is used." Eby says.

Perhaps the study's most larming — but not surprising — finding, he says, is that only so 10 of the 87 drivers interviewed in a separate pilot test on child a safety seat misuse had both the safety seat misuse had both the safety seat insue had be the safety seat in the vehicle and and and at least one error in placing the child in the safety seat in the vehicle and a least one error in placing the child in the safety seat it in the vehicle and the child in the safety seat it is the webicle and a least one error in placing the child in the safety seat it is the webicle and a child in the safety seat it is the webicle and child in the safety seat it is the webicle and child in the safety seat itself.

The most common problems, he says, are related to snugness of fit—securing the seat to the vehicle and strapping the child in the seat.

Because of seat padding and some vehicle designs, it can be difficult or impossible to tightly attach the child safety seat. Eby

attach the child satety seat, and says.

"Parents should check on the compatibility of the safety seat with the design of the vehicle before purchasing either one.

"On the other hand, the harness strap is fairly easy to use and to tighten. It may be that parents are reluctant to tighten the harness or sightly that their children cannot move about. Public information and education programs should highlight the dangers of not adequately securing the child in the seat.

Other common types of child safety-seat misuse are related to the use of the safety-belt locking clip and the harness positioning clip — both of which are not casiny to the safety seat instruction but instead seem to require hands on demonstration. Eby says.

Other problems include having the safety seat's harness at an incorrect position relative to the child's shoulders, having more than three inches of seat more ment in any direction, in the safety seat's harness at an incorrect position relative to the child's shoulders, having more hand three inches of seat more ment in any direction, in the safety seat in an unright position.

"Our study present and, or infant seats, not using the safety belt through the seat and, or infant seats, not using the seat's base and leaving the cast's base and leaving the cast's base and leaving the cast or infant seats, not using the seat's base and leaving the cast of the safety seat should attend a hands on, instructional programs to marvee proper use of a hands on, instructional session offered by local community when the design of the safety seat should attend a hands on, instructional session of fered by local community when the design of the safety seat should attend a hands on, instructional session of fered by local community when the design of the safety seat should attend a hands on, instructional session of fered by local community and the safety seat should attend a hands on, instructional session of fered by local community and redirections.

health departments and pedia tricians.

NO. NO.

If You're Sick Of Saying It, How Do You Think Your Pet Feels?



Introducing the Michigan Humane Society's Pet Education Center.

A training and obedience facility specializing in positive reinforcement

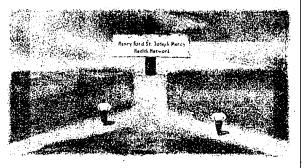
for cats, dogs, and people. Classes are forming right now. So, why don't you call (248) 650-1059 today? Admit it, wouldn't it feel nice to say "good boy" and "attagirl" once in a while?



Michigan Humane Society



A new direction in healthcare



The road to good health just got easier

Now, more than ever, people are looking for greater freedom and more choice in selecting where and when they get health . care. The Henry Ford St. Joseph Mercy Health Network does just that by offering more choices in Oakland County. Whether you have Henry Ford or Mercy as part of

your healthcare plan, you now have access to both. This means additional choice of physicians, expanded access to specialty services within Oakland County and local hospitalization. To learn more about the Henry Ford St. Joseph Mercy Health Network, call: 1-888-240-4679

