

Magazine articles jeopardize and empower young women's sexuality

September 4 2012

Los Angeles, CA (September 4, 2012) While the effects of sexualized media on young women has long been debated, a new study finds that women who read sex-related magazine articles from popular women's magazines like *Cosmopolitan* are less likely to view premarital sex as a risky behavior. Additionally, the women who are exposed to these articles are more supportive of sexual behavior that both empowers women and prioritizes their own sexual pleasure. This study was published in a recent article from *Psychology of Women Quarterly* (published by SAGE).

Study authors Janna L. Kim and L. Monique Ward wrote, "When exposed to explicit textual messages about female sexual assertiveness in women's magazines, readers regarded women's capacity to experience and act on feelings of [sexual desire](#) more favorably."

To execute the study, 150 women college students were randomly assigned to read articles from two popular magazines: one set of articles about women's roles in [sexual relationships](#) and the other set about general entertainment unrelated to sexual relationships.

In addition to finding that the group of women exposed to the sex-related articles endorsed more [risky sexual behavior](#), the researchers found that white women in particular viewed premarital sex as less risky and endorsed taking on a more assertive sexual role than women of color.

Kim and Ward concluded, "Our results suggest that the complex and sometimes conflicting representations of female sexuality proliferating in the mass media and popular culture could potentially have both empowering and problematic effects on women's developing sexual identities."

More information: The article "Striving for Pleasure without Fear: Short-Term Effects of Reading a Women's Magazine on Women's Sexual Attitudes" in *Psychology of Women Quarterly* is available free at: pwq.sagepub.com/content/early/.../442856.full.pdf+html

Provided by SAGE Publications

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