

'I'm not just fat, I'm old!'

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Similar to talking about being fat, talking about being old is an important indicator of body dissatisfaction, shows research in BioMed Central's open access journal *Journal of Eating Disorders*.

[Body dissatisfaction](#) is known to be correlated with, and predictive of, physical and [mental health problems](#) including binge eating, emotional eating, stress, low self-esteem, depression, and use of unhealthy weight control behaviours. High levels of talking about weight and being fat, 'fat talk', is known to be a good indicator of body dissatisfaction.

In order to see if the impact of 'fat talk' and other aspects of body image such as ageing, 'old talk', was the same throughout women's lives, researchers from Trinity University and University of the West of England surveyed almost 1000 women, whose ages ranged from 18 to 87.

The results showed that both 'fat talk' and 'old talk' occurred throughout women's lives, but in general women talked less about age and getting older than they did about their concerns with weight. 'Fat talk' appeared to be a younger woman's topic and became less frequent with age, while 'old talk' increased.

Women who reported higher levels of 'fat talk' and 'old talk' also tended to have a more [negative body image](#). Dr. Carolyn Black Becker, who led this study, noted, "Until now, most research has focused on the negative effects of the thin-ideal and speech, such as 'fat talk', in [younger women](#), but we need to remember that the thin-ideal is also a young-ideal which,

as our results show, becomes increasingly important to negative body image as women age."

More information: I'm not just fat, I'm old: has the study of body image overlooked "old talk"? Carolyn Black Becker, Phillippa C Diedrichs, Glen Jankowski and Chelsey Werchan, *Journal of Eating Disorders* (in press)

Provided by BioMed Central

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