

# Cosmetics adverts tell women they're inadequate

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Advertising language tells women they are always below an imaginary standard, says Dr Helen Ringrow. Credit: University of Portsmouth

Advertisements for make-up encourage women to see themselves as flawed and needing to be fixed, according to a linguist at the University of Portsmouth.

Dr Helen Ringrow, of the University of Portsmouth, found the underlying theme in advertisements for [women's cosmetics](#) was their bodies need constant work to fix problems including dry hair, lack of glow and poor skin.

She said: "The [language](#) used tells women their faces, hair and bodies are always falling below some imaginary standard. It makes women feel they're never quite measuring up, never quite right.

"It also creates problems we never knew we had, such as selling us deodorant which makes our underarm skin tone appear more even.

"The multi-billion pound beauty business thrives on making women's bodies appear to be a flawed commodity which cosmetics can fix."

In addition to using sex and the promise of youthfulness to sell products, the industry's advertising also relied heavily on scientific language.

While women are bombarded with claims about products, they may, of course, be sceptical about those, Dr Ringrow said.

Dr Ringrow, of the University's School of Languages and Area Studies, released the results of her research in a book, 'The Language of Cosmetics Advertising,' published by Palgrave.



Credit: University of Portsmouth

Cosmopolitan magazine has a circulation of 280,000 in the UK, and 380,000 in France; Elle magazine has a circulation of 170,000 in the UK, and 380,000 in France.

Provided by University of Portsmouth

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