

Research examines evolving standards of beauty

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A new research letter published by *JAMA Dermatology* analyzes People magazine's World's Most Beautiful list to compare standards of beauty in 1990 with the present day.

Neelam A. Vashi, M.D., of the Boston University School of Medicine, and coauthors compared 50 celebrities from the 1990 list with 135 celebrities from the 2017 list. Researchers extracted information from the list for age, sex, race, [skin](#) type, hair color, eye color and any visible dermatologic conditions.

The authors report:

- In 1990, lighter skin (Fitzpatrick skin types 1 to 3) represented 88 percent and darker skin (Fitzpatrick skin types 4 to 6) represented 12 percent of the list. In 2017, lighter skin types represented 70.4 percent and darker skin types 29.6 percent of the list.
- The average age of celebrities on the list increased from 33.2 in 1990 to 38.9 in 2017.
- The proportion of females increased from 52 percent in 1990 to 88.1 percent in 2017.
- The proportion of celebrities of nonwhite races also increased from 24 percent in 1990 to 40 percent in 2017. Celebrities of mixed race were represented by one person (2 percent) in 1990 and by 14 people in (10.4 percent) in 2017.

"As evidenced by our data and contrary to our hypothesis, at present, a wider variety of skin colors and inclusion of older age groups are represented among those deemed to be the most beautiful. ... The mass media platform has for years introduced certain criteria for what constitutes beauty. Through an examination of the WMB [World's Most Beautiful] issue of *People*, we found that these beauty standards are evolving as people learn how to integrate the effects of media with exposure to new cultures and different norms," the article concludes.

More information: *JAMA Dermatology* (2017). [DOI: 10.1001/jamadermatol.2017.3693](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamadermatol.2017.3693)

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