

Mount Saint Vincent University
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**A Father's Influence of His Daughter's Perception
of Her Body Image and Dieting Practices**

by
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Abstract

Body image and diet have been an area of concern in young females for a number of years. In 2000, it was reported that 50% of adolescent girls had dieted and that an even higher percentage wished that they were thinner¹. Body image, as defined by Stokes et al.², is the concept of one's body that is formed as one begins to observe and compare the self to others. Based on an increase in media awareness and other societal pressures to be thin, it can be speculated that in the future an even higher percentage of adolescent females will have dieted. In today's society there is a constant pressure to achieve the cultural ideal of a thin, pre-pubertal type body. Society portrays this ideal in television shows, music videos and magazines. Unfortunately, young girls are striving to attain this ideal body and will often go to extreme measures^{2,3}.

Family relationships are one of the main influences on an adolescent girl's development of self-image including body image perception and dieting habits^{4,5,6}. The family is the primary agency for socialization^{7,8}. Parents provide information to their children as well as act as role models. The literature reports the results of investigations on both maternal and paternal influences on a daughter's body image and diet; however, there is more emphasis on the same-sex parent-child relationship. Ample research has been conducted regarding a mother's influence on her daughter's body image and diet, while the strength of a father-son relationship has also been studied in detail. It is important to determine if a daughter feels that her father is influential in her self-image development as he is the primary male role model in her life and adolescence is when a daughter needs her father's parenting the most

The purpose of this study was to determine how adolescent females feel about their bodies, and what factors influence their body image development. This study assessed the father-daughter relationship and determined if its influence, if any, on the development of body image and safe diet habits in young adolescent females.

With ethics approval, ten adolescent females were recruited from Exploits Valley High School via purposive sampling. The researcher gave a brief presentation to random classes, with participants volunteering at their leisure. Once ten participants had volunteered, and parental consent was obtained, the study began. Each female participated in an in-depth semi-structured interview which allowed participants to share their experiences in an unbiased setting.

Thematic analysis of the transcribed interviews organized the data into five major themes: body image, dieting practices, relationships, influences and pressures and communication. These themes were further broken down into a variety of sub-themes. The data indicated that overall these young females have a positive sense of self with minor episodes of body dissatisfaction. Participants identified three major influences on their body image and diet: peers, parents and the media. This study also indicated that the majority of participants felt a closer relationship with their father, than with their mother. They felt a sense of closeness, playfulness and trustworthiness all which lead to their father's having a positive impact on their lives in various ways.

This research provides a good initial understanding of the father-daughter relationship and its effect on the daughter's development of body image and dieting habits. Although this was a small study, results provide solid information which can help guide Dietitians in their counseling of young females on weight related issues, such as

weight management and eating disorders. It is essential to include both parents in dietetic counseling with regards to weight management, healthy eating and eating disorders, as it was determined that both the mother, and the father, have an impact on the overall eating habits and nutrition knowledge of these young females.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

Abstract

Acknowledgements

1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 Problem Statement	1
1.2 Research Objectives	3
1.3 Significance of Study	3
1.4 Definition of Terms	5
2.0 Literature Review	6
2.1 Body Image in Adolescent Females	6
2.2 Dieting in Adolescent Females	9
2.3 Family Influence on Body Image and Dieting of Adolescent Females	10
2.4 The Family Dyad	15
2.5 The Nature of Father-Daughter Relationship	17
2.6 The In-Depth Qualitative Interview	19
2.7 Phenomenology	22
3.0 Theoretical Framework	26
3.1 Social Ecological Framework	26
3.1.1 Microsystem	29
3.1.2 Mesosystem	29
3.1.3 Exosystem	30
3.1.4 Macrosystem	30
3.1.5 Summary	31
4.0 Methodology	33
4.1 Research Design	33
4.2 Subject Selection	33
4.2.1 Inclusion Criteria	34
4.2.2 Exclusion Criteria	34
4.3 Data Collection	34
4.3.1 Participants	35
4.3.2 Mock Interview	35
4.3.3 Interview	36
4.3.4 Interview Guide	37
4.3.5 Consent and Authorization	38
4.4 Data Analysis	38
4.5 Ethical Issues	39

5.0 Results	41
5.1 Interview Participants	41
5.1.1 Participant Profiles	41
5.1.2 Participant Interaction	44
5.2 Coded Data	45
5.2.1 Organizing the Data	47
5.3 Body Image	47
5.3.1 Definition	48
5.3.2 Importance	49
5.3.3 Feelings Towards Self	51
5.3.4 Dissatisfaction	53
5.4 Diet	54
5.4.1 Definition	54
5.4.2 Frequency and Duration	55
5.4.3 Methods of Dieting	57
5.4.4 Healthy Eating	59
5.5 Relationships	60
5.5.1 Parents	60
5.5.2 Father	62
5.5.3 Conflict in the Family	65
5.6 Influences and Pressures	66
5.6.1 Peer Influence	66
5.6.2 Parental Influence	68
5.6.2.1 Parental Dieting Habits	70
5.6.3 Media Influence	73
5.6.4 Other Influences	75
5.7 Communication	76
5.7.1 Discussions About Body Image and Diet	76
5.7.2 Health Information	78
5.7.3 Comments Made by Parents	79
5.7.4 Comments Made by Peers	83
6.0 Discussion	86
6.1 Microsystem	88
6.1.1 Family Relationships	88
6.2 Mesosystem	95
6.2.1 Peers	95
6.3 Macrosystem	98
6.3.1 Cultural Pressures and Media Influences	98
7.0 Final Thoughts	102
7.1 Summary Statements	102
7.2 Limitations and Biases	103
7.3 Implications for Practice	104
7.4 Future Research	106

7.5 Conclusions	107
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References	108
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Appendices

Appendix A: Letter to Principal of High School	112
Appendix B: Letter to School Board Office	115
Appendix C: Recruitment Letter- Participants	118
Appendix D: Recruitment Letter- Parents	121
Appendix E: Information Sheet	124
Appendix F: Information and Authorization Form	128
Appendix G: Free and Informed Consent Form	132
Appendix H: Interview Guide	135
Appendix I: Interview Checklist	138
Appendix J: Exploits Valley High School Ethics Approval	140
Appendix K: Nova Central School District Ethics Approval	142
Appendix L: MSVU Ethics Approval	144

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Problem Statement

Body image and diet have been an area of concern in young females for a number of years. In 2000, it was reported that 50% of adolescent girls had dieted and that an even higher percentage wished that they were thinner (1). Body image, as defined by Stokes et al. (2), is the concept of one's body that is formed as one begins to observe and compare the self to others. Based on an increase in media awareness and other societal pressures to be thin, it can be speculated that in the future an even higher percentage of adolescent females will have dieted. In today's society there is a constant pressure to achieve the cultural ideal of a thin, pre-pubertal type body. Society portrays this ideal in television shows, music videos and magazines. Unfortunately, young girls are striving to attain this ideal body and will often go to extreme measures (2,3).

Family relationships are one of the main influences on an adolescent girl's development of self-image including body image perception and dieting habits (4,5,6). The family is the primary agency for socialization (7,8). Parents provide information to their children as well as act as role models. The literature reports the results of investigations on both maternal and paternal influences on a daughter's body image and diet; however, there is more emphasis on the same-sex parent-child relationship. Ample research has been conducted regarding a mother's influence on her daughter's body image and diet, while the strength of a father-son relationship has also been studied in detail. It is important to determine if a daughter feels that her father is influential in her self-image development as he is the primary male role model in her life. In-depth

interviews with adolescent girls will be used to investigate the nature of the father-daughter relationship, and whether or not it has an effect on the daughter's perception of her body image and/or dieting habits.

1.2 Research Objectives

1. To identify how female adolescents feel about their bodies and to identify factors which are influential on their developing self-image including body image and diet.
2. To determine if a father, and in what ways, is influential in his daughter's perception of her body image and dieting habits.
3. To determine if a father-daughter relationship exhibits any characteristics which are distinct from those identified in the literature for same-sex, parent-child pairs.

1.3 Significance of Study

The effect of familial influence on body image perception and dieting habits of adolescent daughters has been well established. Researchers indicate that family relationships are one of the most influential factors in the development of a positive body image and of safe and healthy dieting habits (19,21,22,41). Both positive and negative influences have been found to affect one's perception of body image.

The literature focuses mainly on same-sex, parent-child relationships with a focus on maternal influences on the daughter's self-development. Generally, research in the area of parental influence on body image and diet focuses on the mother's impact on the daughter's development of self-image. It has been stated that mothers and daughters have a distinctive relationship in which the mother acts as a model for her daughter, in both positive and negative ways. Mothers are models for their daughters in terms of body satisfaction and weight control. To date, there has been very little research conducted on the nature of the father-daughter relationship and its influence on the daughter's development of a positive self, including body image and dieting practices. It is important

to determine if a similar relationship exists between a daughter and her father. In the event that a female care-giver is not involved in the daughter's life, does the father have the same impact as a mother would and is this relationship as strong and influential in the development of body satisfaction and safe dieting practices?

1.4 Definition of Terms

Adolescent:

A young person who has undergone puberty but who has not reached full maturity (the period of time in your life after your physical growth has stopped and you are fully developed); a teenager.

Body Dissatisfaction:

The difference between one's ideal and actual weight (9).

Body Image:

The concept of one's body that is formed as one begins to observe and compare the self to others (2)

Dyad:

Two individuals or units regarded as a pair.

Eating Disorder:

Any of various psychological disorders, such as anorexia nervosa or bulimia, characterized by severe disturbances in eating habits.

Gender Theory:

An analysis of difference between family roles and behavior of mother and fathers in terms of gender. It concentrates on the socialization of boys into masculine and girls into feminine gender roles (11).

Self-Esteem:

A generalized sense of self-worth or self-acceptance; the evaluative component of self-image (10).

Self-Image:

A phenomenological organization of individuals' experiences and ideas about themselves in all aspects of their lives (10).

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 *Body Image in Adolescent Females*

The majority of teenage girls are profoundly unhappy with the size and shape of their bodies (12). In today's society there is an enormous emphasis placed on females obtaining the "ideal body." This "ideal body" consists of slim thighs, buttocks, waist and a flat stomach, similar to the shape of a pre-pubescent female (3). Girls learn early in their lives that they are evaluated for how they look rather than for how they feel or what they can do (13). During the adolescent years, a girl's body changes; there is an increase in body fat associated with puberty, making the body progressively different from the ideal body in our society (5). Not only is adolescence a time of body changes, but also during this time, self-focus and awareness of other's evaluations of self are heightened, making it a very influential time in one's life (14).

Body image does not consist of one concept. It is a multidimensional concept having both affective and perceptual components (9). Body image is defined as "the multidimensional self-attitude toward the size, shape and aesthetics of one's body." Body image is not only formed on one's own opinion of self but also as we compare ourselves to others, which is the multidimensional affect (2). Body image is not merely a physical assessment of one's self, it also has a psychological component (2). The physical component of body image is a representation of a given body feature, for example, one's face or legs. On the other hand, the psychological meaning of body image is a reflection of a feeling or personal quality expressed by each bodily feature (2). When studying the body image of a specific

population, it is important to keep this multidimensional concept in mind and to understand that body image is a deep feeling about one's self.

Every day females receive messages with regards to body image. Culture bombards females with messages and images of the "ideal body" (6). This "ideal body" becomes the standard by which women define themselves. This pressure exerted on women by culture initiates a drive towards thinness as well as a fear of becoming fat. Although this pressure affects women of all ages, cultural beauty ideals appear to be a more significant influence on the development of the adolescent female (14). Each and every day, young females are subjected to music videos, television shows and magazines with models that are considered to be society's elite. Young girls are striving to obtain the "ideal" body of those models (2,3). Unfortunately, this female ideal body has been present in society for a number of years, and alarmingly the perceived ideal weight has decreased over the last thirty years (14). It is, therefore, expected that females will strive to be thinner with each passing year to obtain this ideal.

As previously stated, girls are generally dissatisfied with their bodies. Body dissatisfaction is defined as the difference between one's ideal weight and actual weight (9). It is this dissatisfaction that leads to dieting attempts, which in turn could result in more serious conditions such as eating disorders. In a study by Graham et al. (1), 50% of adolescent girls report having dieted and an even higher percentage report wanting to be thinner. This suggests a very high body dissatisfaction level in these girls. Body image concerns and dissatisfaction, along with preoccupation with weight, increase as girls become older. A study completed on three age groups of girls was indicative of this

increase. In pre-pubertal girls, 34% were dissatisfied with their bodies; 36% of pubescent girls and 76% of post-pubescent girls were dissatisfied with their bodies (15). This study suggests that as a female moves further from her pre-pubescent body, which is considered the ideal by culture, the more dissatisfied she becomes. It has been documented that body dissatisfaction increases between the ages of 13 and 15 years (14). Body dissatisfaction, much like body image, is not a one-dimensional concept. There are two aspects of body image disturbance or dissatisfaction: (i) concern with body shape and (ii) body size estimation, where individuals think of themselves as larger than they actually are (12). Body dissatisfaction varies in severity from person to person. It can range from mild dissatisfaction with a particular area of the body to extreme body shape disparagement where people find their bodies revolting or loathsome (12).

Body image is a serious concept in one's life, and it does not evolve without influence from various sources. According to Graham et al. (1) there are a number of factors associated with the development of body image including: self-esteem, gender role identity, mother's dieting status, race and culture, puberty status and parent-child relationships. Adolescence is a time when interpersonal relationships become very important. These relationships are the primary means through which people develop identity and self-image, including body image (16). One of these interpersonal relationships which is a factor in developing a positive or negative body image is that with peers. Peers have a strong influence on one's self-perception, especially in young females. An adolescent's peer group is the primary catalyst in the development of body dissatisfaction (15). It may be merely the presence of these factors that affect one's perception of her body image; however, one area found to be influential in developing a

negative body image is teasing. Peers are most often the teasers; however, 30% of mothers and 24% of fathers were also found to tease their adolescent daughter concerning her body shape or weight (17). This is an indication that family members, in particular mothers, have an influence on their daughter's body image and weight, be it positive or negative.

2.2 Dieting in Adolescent Females

Dieting appears to be the norm as young girls are exposed to various social models of dieting (4). This societal influence has led to a fear of fatness, which is almost an integral part of a female adolescent's thinking (18). In a 2000 study by Graham et al.(1), it was reported that 50% of adolescent girls reported having dieted. With the increase in media and cultural pressure, it can be speculated that this number has increased since then. Because of this cultural ideal, many adolescent girls are pursuing an ultra-thin figure and are willing to engage in almost any activity that will allow them to achieve this ideal (18). Unfortunately, many of these slimming strategies are potentially harmful.

Dieting has been defined as a wide range of behaviors and strategies for weight control (8). Adolescent females who have dieted have multiple methods of achieving their ideal body weight. Some of these strategies include: reducing intake of high-fat foods, avoiding certain foods such as bread or milk, or even skipping meals or snacks (3). These strategies may be followed for a short time or over several months or years. As can be seen from the strategies used by dieters, there is a variation in the seriousness as well as the duration of dieting in adolescents (18). Dieting is often linked to more serious

conditions including eating disorders. Ryan et al. (18) found that the relative risk of dieters developing an eating disorder was eight times that of non-dieters.

Much like body image, dieting has various contributing factors including degree of body satisfaction, and parental and peer pressure. It is important to remember that, although one of these factors could be body satisfaction, body image and diet are actually separate, but related constructs. It has been shown that as one's body image satisfaction decreases, the risk of problematic dieting increases (5). Parental and peer pressures also play an important role as girls who have dieted show higher levels of perceived parental and peer influence than non-dieters (19). It is important to acknowledge the differences that exist between females with regards to influence, and consequently the intensity of dieting, as well as the factors influencing it.

2.3 Family Influences on Body Image and Dieting Habits of Adolescent Females

The family is the primary agency of socialization for children (7,8). Parents have an influence on their children from the day they are born by being role models as well as providing important information. One topic area for which parents are a major source of information is food, nutrition and weight (3). Parents, other family members, and peers are often found to intensify the socio-cultural emphasis on the ideal body for young adolescent females (5,20). Along with this emphasis on the cultural ideal, there are numerous other ways in which family may influence the body image of an adolescent female. Some of these influences include: perceptions of family relations, modeling of mother's behaviors and attitudes and direct communications between family members (5).

It is important to realize that parental influence varies between mothers and fathers, with mothers being more nurturing, while fathers are more activity orientated (11). Parental influence is of a much different nature than influence exerted by peers, which is also an influence on adolescent girls (19). Parents' modeling, in particular that of mothers, is very influential on an adolescent female. The family may reinforce the cultural ideal of thinness via modeling of weight concerns, dieting and exercise pressures (21). Along with modeling comes the influence of the family environment in general. A family which places emphasis on physical appearance and body shape may result in the daughter adopting certain behaviors in order to achieve an ideal body. It is important to remember that this ideal body may vary from family to family, so what is acceptable in one household may not be in another. In families where physical appearance and thinness are important, maintaining or achieving the ideal body shape may be the only way a daughter can receive confirmation regarding her self (22). Along with their influence, parental attitudes in particular are also important. Parental attitudes towards adolescent daughters in relation to eating behaviors and body shape are of great significance (41). These attitudes toward body weight can have a negative influence on young girls, sometimes leading to the development of eating disorders.

Family relations also exert an influence on an adolescent's life. Byeley et al. (5) discovered that the perception of a more negative family relationship (i.e. less cohesion, more conflict, etc) by girls was strongly predictive of dieting behavior in these girls. Body image is also influenced by family relations. Young females who have a negative body image tend to report low levels of family connectedness (6). Communication is

closely tied to family relations. Communication can influence one positively or negatively. Parents who make comments regarding their daughters' weights or body shapes are more likely to have daughters who diet and express weight dissatisfaction (4). Unfortunately, parents may be unaware of how influential these comments are on their daughters. They do not realize that they may be inadvertently encouraging their daughters to diet (4). Making direct comments concerning body weight or shape is not the only way a daughter may feel pressure to diet and achieve the ideal body. Parents' own activities concerning body weight are often communicated to their young daughters. Parents, who are overly concerned with their own body weight and attempt to control it, often communicate their perceptions, beliefs and attitudes towards dieting and weight control to their children (7).

Mothers and daughters have been shown to share similar attitudes toward dieting and weight. This is not surprising given that both are experiencing the same culturally derived vision of the ideal female body (4,13). A daughter's body experience is affected by what her family tells her as well as how her mother feels about her own body (13). Generally, the degree to which a female identifies with her mother plays a very important role in identity formation. Body image is one component of this formed identity. An adolescent female is often influenced by her mother's attitude toward her own body (23). Mothers play a part, along with other family members and peers, in transmitting cultural values regarding weight, shape and appearance (24). Studies show that there is a strong relationship between a mother's dieting habits and the extent to which she encourages her

daughter to diet (4). Adolescent girls often learn to diet from their mothers, and some mothers provide explicit advice on dieting (25).

As previously mentioned, mothers and fathers exert a different kind and level of influence on their daughters. A mother's influence is one of being more of a role model to her daughter (26). Frequently mothers are role models for weight control and dieting for their daughters. Mothers have concerns regarding weight and body shape for themselves and for their daughters. It is this concern that serves as a modeling cue for daughters to begin weight management practices. Mothers often exert pressure on their daughters based on their perception of their daughter's body image and diet habits (5). A daughter is also influenced by how her mother feels about her own body. Mothers will often transmit their own weight concerns to their daughters, which exerts extra pressure on the daughter to achieve the ideal body as seen by society. Maharaj et al. (22) found that mothers who are weight preoccupied have an impairment of self-worth. This gives the mother a limited capacity to support her daughter's developing self. This maternal support is essential for healthy development of a young female. A mother's dieting habits and desire to be thinner are only a part of her daughter's dieting and body image (20).

It is important to note that a mother is not solely responsible for, and is not the only influence on, a daughter's behavior. Paternal influence is also important in the development of a female's identity. It is suggested that fathers are more influential now than they were a number of years ago. Lewis and Lamb (27) report that thirty years ago fathers were considered the "forgotten contributors" to child development. Today, fathers

play an important role in their daughters' lives and bonding with fathers is very important in relation to dieting behaviors of daughters (19). A father's satisfaction with his own weight is one factor that is influential in his daughter's life. The other factor which appears to be even more predominant is comments made to, or about, the daughter regarding weight and body image (4). These weight related comments from male family members often are cited as a reason why a young female may began to diet or try to lose weight (7). Father- daughter interactions may play a role in the development of self and body image; however, studies show conflicting evidence. Some studies indicate that many females are relatively uninfluenced by their fathers because interactions include play, recreation and goal-orientated tasks (20,27), while others indicate that paternal influence is very important especially in terms of comments made by fathers regarding weight or body shape (4,19).

Although maternal and paternal influences both exhibit some effect in a daughter's life, studies show that there is a very strong mother-daughter influence when it comes to body image and diet. Hill and Franklin (7) stated that maternal dieting is more influential than paternal dieting. One reason for paternal influence being of a lesser extent is that males are less concerned with their body weight and they are less likely to control their weight and, therefore, are not models for their daughters (20) Young females could model the behavior of their fathers, with less importance being placed on weight, but unfortunately they don't. Mothers generally have more influence on eating behaviors, including dieting, than do fathers (41). Daughters generally perceive more encouragement to control their weight from mothers than from fathers, and mothers are more explicit when discussing

weight control methods (20). Again, this is because of their preoccupation with their own body weight along with other factors. One of these factors includes the fact that mothers generally spend more time with their children than do fathers. Unfortunately, it appears that fathers simply have less impact on their children than do mothers (27). It is obvious from numerous studies that mothers have a strong influence on their daughter's lives, especially when it comes to body image and diet. It is important to determine whether a similar "or any" relationship exists between a daughter and her father. In the case that a female care-giver is not involved in the daughter's life, does a father have the same impact as a mother would and is the relationship as strong and influential?

2.4 *The Family Dyad*

The parent-child relationship may be a common concept; however, it is not a simple one. Parents cannot be described without knowing whether we are discussing the mother or the father and the same applies to children, be it sons or daughters. Steinberg was the first to define the four parent-child relationship dyads (11). The four dyads are: mother-son, mother-daughter, father-son and father-daughter. Mothers and fathers have different relationships with their children; however, all four of the parent-child dyads show distinct features. These features derive from the underlying fact that gender is powerful and has a pervasive influence on family relationships (11).

Gender theory provides one explanation of the difference in maternal and paternal influences on their children. This theory concentrates on the socialization of boys into masculine and girls into feminine gender roles, hence the distinct nature of the mother-daughter, father-son relationships. Culture provides much of the force behind gender

theory. Young boys are taught to be athletic and enjoy outdoor activities while young girls are taught to play house, to play with dolls and often times are taught to bake at a young age. Males and females behave differently from one another based on their perceptions of themselves, their behavior and the behavior of others in accordance with the cultural definition of gender appropriateness. Family relationships are influenced by gender combinations. Boys and mothers interact differently than do boys and fathers and the same applies for girls (11). Typically mothers and daughters and fathers and sons share common interests, but mothers and sons or fathers and daughters may have a special emotional connection (28). It appears that modeling occurs more frequently between a parent and the same-sex child (30).

The mother-daughter dyad is one of the most distinct, as well as the most closely studied, of the four. Mothers and daughters are closely identified and this sameness is the bond between them. Mothers are models for their daughters. Mothers and daughters share a connected knowing which is one distinct quality of their relationship. This connected knowing requires intimacy and equality between self and objectivity. This relationship lacks distance and impersonality (11). The father-son relationship, the other distinct relationship, is one of the most influential relationships that a son will form in a lifetime (31). A father is a model for his son in building masculine characteristics, as well as affecting the way he sees himself and the way others see him (11). The father-son relationship differs from the mother-daughter relationship in that a power role is maintained. The father plays the role of the superior while the son is the dependent party (32). One of the less distinct dyad relationships is that of mother-son. This relationship

has generally been found to be problematic; however, it is said to be an intense and passionate relationship (11). Sons are mainly faced with developing their masculinity and mothers are seen from a feminine viewpoint. Boys are generally raised to develop their masculinity in terms of sports, hunting and fishing and other outdoor activities. Females are seen as the opposite, as domestics; therefore, this can be viewed by the son as something they are not supposed to be associated with, hence, them distancing themselves from their mothers. This explains the difference between the mother-daughter and mother-son relationship. Mothers see their sons as “the other,” mothers being of a feminine viewpoint and sons being masculine. (11). There is little research corresponding to the mother-son relationship. The final of the four dyads is the father-daughter relationship. This relationship is considered separate and distinct with a sense of difference. Similar to mother and son the opposite sex of the father-daughter relationship causes the separation between the two. Daughters view their mothers as role models and strive to be like them. On the other hand, they see their father as the opposite and the same closeness is often not present (11). The father-daughter relationship will be further discussed in the following section.

2.5 The Nature of Father-Daughter Relationships

Father-daughter relationships are one of the least distinct relationships in the four family dyads. This relationship has not been studied as frequently as the more distinct, same-sex relationships. Nevertheless, fathers were found to be an important part of their daughter’s development (11). This relationship is not only influential on the daughter, but is extremely influential on the father (33). Fathers may not have the same impact as mothers, but that is not to say that they are not influential in their daughter’s self-image

development. Brown et al. (34) found that daughters who indicate having a positive relationship with their fathers had a better emotional well-being than those indicating a negative relationship. Studies indicate that the father-daughter relationship is predictive of the daughter's self-esteem, which includes body image and dieting habits (30).

Although fathers generally are not models for dieting practices for their daughters, the quality of the father-daughter relationship is a predictor of dieting (21). Studies have shown that fathers do not model dieting due to a lack of caring about their body weight. On the contrary, Keel et al.(4) found that fathers do in fact have an impact on their daughter's dieting and approximately 10% of fathers helped their daughters diet. This is a relatively low percentage; however, it is an indication that fathers do have an influence on their daughters' dieting behavior.

Multiple studies have reported that fathers have no influence on their daughters' body image while others indicate a profound influence. Dixon et al. (21) state that there is no relationship between a father's attitude and his daughter's body satisfaction. In a conflicting article, Kelly (33) states that fathers have a profound influence on how their daughters view themselves. He states that fathers ought to encourage daughters to appreciate their bodies for what they can do with them, not how they look. While one study indicates no influence, the other indicates how a father can influence his daughter's self development. It is evident from these conflicting results that more research needs to be completed to investigate the influence a father has on his daughter's dieting habits and body image.

2.6 *The In-Depth Qualitative Interview*

Qualitative research allows the researcher to explore the how and why of a phenomenon (35). Qualitative researchers watch people in their own settings, and believe the best way to understand a phenomenon is by studying it in context (36). The essence of qualitative data is to capture life as it is lived (36). Qualitative data represents real life situations. There are four types of qualitative research design: grounded theory, ethnography, phenomenology and biography (37). Each of these four designs are different in varying ways, but all are similar in that data can be collected via personal interviews.

The most common qualitative data collection method is the in-depth interview (38). An interview is a conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee with the purpose of eliciting information (39). The interview is a technique suitable to attain a subjective description of experience. Individual interviews tend to be more useful for evoking personal experiences and perspectives, especially on sensitive topics (38). It is a personal and social experience for both the interviewer and the interviewee (40). An important aspect of the personal interview is the relationship between the interviewer and the participant. When the participant hears about the study, rapport is being developed (41). This relationship is a reflection of purpose, structure and method of in-depth interviewing. Unfortunately, in using this technique, distortion of answers of asked questions can occur if there is too much or too little attunement between the interviewer and the interviewee (41).

There are various aspects of an interview which must be taken into consideration prior to the interview itself. Some of these aspects include: sample selection, participants, and setting and length of the interview. The most common method of sampling for interviews is purposive sampling (41). To identify participants that will be beneficial to the research study, one must go where the experience is located; school, office, church, etc. (42).

Random sampling is not an option in qualitative research as sample size is always small and there is no room for randomization (41). There is, however; always an element of self-selection, as participants must give consent to participate in the study, this may skew results as you will always get individuals who are interested in the study. Although it is difficult to determine the number of participants needed to achieve the understanding of a lived experience, many researchers will set a goal number of participants. One of the most important areas of concern is the location and setting of the interview. It is important that the interviews are conducted where the participant is most comfortable (42). Whether it is at home, at school or in another setting, it is necessary to ensure the comfort of the participant to achieve maximum input from them. Interviews with younger persons would be considerably shorter than those with an adult. The time normally allotted for an interview is 30-90 minutes (41). These time intervals are only a guideline as the appropriate time for an interview will vary between participants.

Interviewing with younger individuals is different from interviewing with an adult.

Initially, recruiting participants under the age of 18 years can be complex. Their parents serve as gatekeepers; therefore, it is their final decision whether or not their child takes part in the study (41). It is important to treat younger individuals the same as an adult

would be treated in an interview. The researcher should give the participant all relevant information regarding the research problem and the interview itself (40). It is essential that the participant be aware of confidentiality and that at no point during or after the interview will his or her parents be informed regarding what was discussed during the interview. The relationship between the interviewer and the young participant is one of great importance. It is quite easy for a young individual to feel intimidated by an older person, whom he or she may view as an authority figure. This may be a sensitive issue; therefore, it is important for the interviewer to try and make a connection with the participant immediately and to avoid patronizing them (41). One way to build this rapport with the young participant is to hold the interview in a setting which is comfortable to the participant and to open with comfortable conversation.

The most common method of interviewing is using the semi-structured technique (43). The semi-structured interview uses open-ended questions and an interview guide to attain the information required from the participants. Using open-ended questions allows the participants to speak freely about the experience being discussed. No answers are presumed and participants are given the opportunity to reconstruct their experience (41). An interview using open-ended questions resembles the telling of a story. Although participants are encouraged to tell their stories as they see fit, often the interviewer will use a guide to assist with keeping the interview on track. This interview guide contains the questions that will establish the focus of the interview (41). Each interview may use a different sequence of the questions but the basic structure of the interview will remain constant for each participant. It is important for the interviewer to let the questions flow

based on what the interviewee is saying (41). The interviewer must always keep in mind that the interview guide is to be used only as a guide and not as a structured outline of the interview.

Using semi-structured or unstructured interviews is a good way to invite adolescent girls to discuss body image and diet. It allows them to talk openly and freely in an informal, non-threatening way about their experiences with their fathers, body image and diet.

Holding these interviews in a comfortable environment for the adolescent girls, limiting length of interview, guaranteeing privacy, and building rapport will optimize information obtained pertinent to their experiences, and will guarantee the best possible information for the study of the relationship between fathers and their daughters' body image.

2.7 *Phenomenology*

Phenomenology was developed by Edmund Husserl as a qualitative research method to investigate the intentional relationships between a person and a situation (44).

Phenomenology can be defined as the study of lived experiences (42). It is the human scientific study of phenomena in which the aim is to fulfill human nature to actualize more fully who we are as individuals (42). Phenomenological research openly respects an individual's own point of view and honors the various perspectives found in the life-world (44). Due to the nature of phenomenology, and its focus on phenomena, it is considered an appropriate method to research human experiences (45). Since phenomenology is a qualitative method of research, the focus is not on the objective nature of things but, on the subjective experience of humans (46). Although it is a

qualitative research method, phenomenology has its own specific methods concerning sampling, participant selection, data collection and analysis. It is representative of qualitative analysis; however, there are intricate details specific to phenomenology.

Participant selection in phenomenological research differs from that of other research methods. Participants in the study must have experienced the phenomena in question. The researcher recruits participants based on their experience, as well as their willingness and ability to describe said experience (46). Donalek (46) describes these participants as ‘co-researchers’, meaning they work with the researcher to explore their experience. Not only is participant selection different in phenomenological research, but so is sampling.

Sampling continues until crystallization or saturation (the redundancy of findings) occurs (44,47). Unlike quantitative research, it is not always possible to determine how many participants are required prior to beginning the study. In phenomenological research it is necessary to consider the nature of the research problem and the potential yield of findings (44). Each research problem may have varying numbers of participants. For instance, if one participant can provide an in-depth knowledge regarding their experience, then this sample size of one may be sufficient (44). Regardless of the number of participants, the sample size is kept small to elucidate the richness of the individual’s experience (37).

Data analysis is on-going in phenomenological research. The researcher begins to analyze data at the beginning of the very first interview, and continues to do so until the final paper is written. The purpose of data analysis in phenomenological research is not to

form theories, operationalize variables, deduce or test hypothesis, but to simply make meaning of the participant's experience in their life-world (44). Before researchers can attempt to draw conclusions from each participant's experience, they must focus on each particular situation and begin their analysis (44). A critical step in data analysis is the researcher's ability to move from an understanding of the whole text to the more specific themes, and then back to the whole text again (37). Phenomenological research is analyzed in a specific manner. Interview data are coded based on the research problem and are then organized into themes; this analysis is referred to as thematic analysis (42). Thematic analysis involves the interview material and observations being converted into text via transcriptions. This conversion serves four purposes: (i) lines of inquiry are identified to find emerging themes; (ii) an interpretive plan and coding protocol are developed for further analysis; (iii) interviews are coded; and (iv) general categories are identified (42). This coding and placing data in themes is a preparatory stage of data analysis, it allows for convenient organization of data for a more structural and in-depth analysis (44).

Phenomenology allows the researcher to establish a rapport with participants, which in turn is beneficial in enabling the revealing of as much of the participants' lived experience as possible. The researcher must be empathic towards the participants, thus making this methodology a very personable one. With its emphasis on the lived experience, phenomenology is perfectly suited as the ground work for the proposed research. Gathering information regarding a father's influence on his daughter's perception of body image and diet is a phenomena that can be accomplished via in-depth

interviews with phenomenological underpinnings. With its small sample size, and specific method of thematic analysis, phenomenology is the ideal methodology to create insight into the phenomenon of question.

3.0 Theoretical Framework

3.1 Social Ecological Framework

The social-ecological framework, developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner, is a conceptual framework which serves to direct attention to a developing individual, their behavior and their environment (48,49). This framework is represented as a series of nested, concentric circles, each of which represents a level of influence from the environment on behavior (49). Bronfenbrenner (50) divides the ecological space of a developing individual into four spheres, which represent environmental influences on the individual's life. Any change or conflict in one of the spheres will "ripple" throughout the other layers (50). Because of this effect, it is important when studying any issue to not only consider the individual, but also the immediate and larger environment that he or she is placed in. One's behavior and the surrounding environment are reciprocal systems indicating that these influences are not linear and can occur bi-directionally, towards the individual and away from the individual (51). Story et al.(51) state that behavior is viewed as affecting and being affected by multiple levels of influence. It is thought that behavior change requires that various levels of influence be targeted for appropriate intervention. Research has led to the assumption that changes in an individual's environment will lead to changes in his or her behavior (52). The building blocks of the social ecological framework are familiar concepts including: molar activity, dyad, role, setting, social network, institution, culture and subculture (50). Molar is an ongoing behavior having a momentum of its own and perceived as having intent by the participants in the setting (50). It is exhibited by the developing person and serves as an indicator of the degree of psychological growth. An example of a molar activity is reading a book or carrying on a telephone conversation. A

dyad is the basic unit of analysis, a two-person system (50); for example, the father-daughter relationship is a dyad. In terms of the social sciences, role can be defined as a set of behaviors and expectations associated with a position in society, for example, a mother or teacher (50). A setting is simply a place where people can readily engage in face-to-face interaction (50). For instance, a school is a setting, as well as church or an office. A social network is similar to a dyad; however, it is defined as a sequential system in which all parties need not be present for the network to exist (50). An example of a social network may include an office where all employees may not be present at the same time. These building blocks are found in all concentric circles of the social-ecological theory and can have various influences at various times in an individual's life.

The four spheres of influence in the social-ecological framework are: the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem and the macrosystem. The four nested spheres represent influence in a developing individual's life. The model as produced by Bronfenbrenner can be seen in Figure 1. At the center of the model, for the purpose of the proposed research, is the adolescent, surrounded by varying levels of influence. During adolescence, individuals are very easily influenced and it is at these times that the environment plays a major role in shaping an individual's behavior. As adolescents become more autonomous, behavior patterns developed during this time are likely to influence their long-term behavior (51). During this time of a person's life, physical, developmental and social changes can affect eating behaviors and nutritional health thus leaving the adolescent at risk for a number of health problems including eating disorders and obesity (51). The four spheres of influence are described in more detail below.

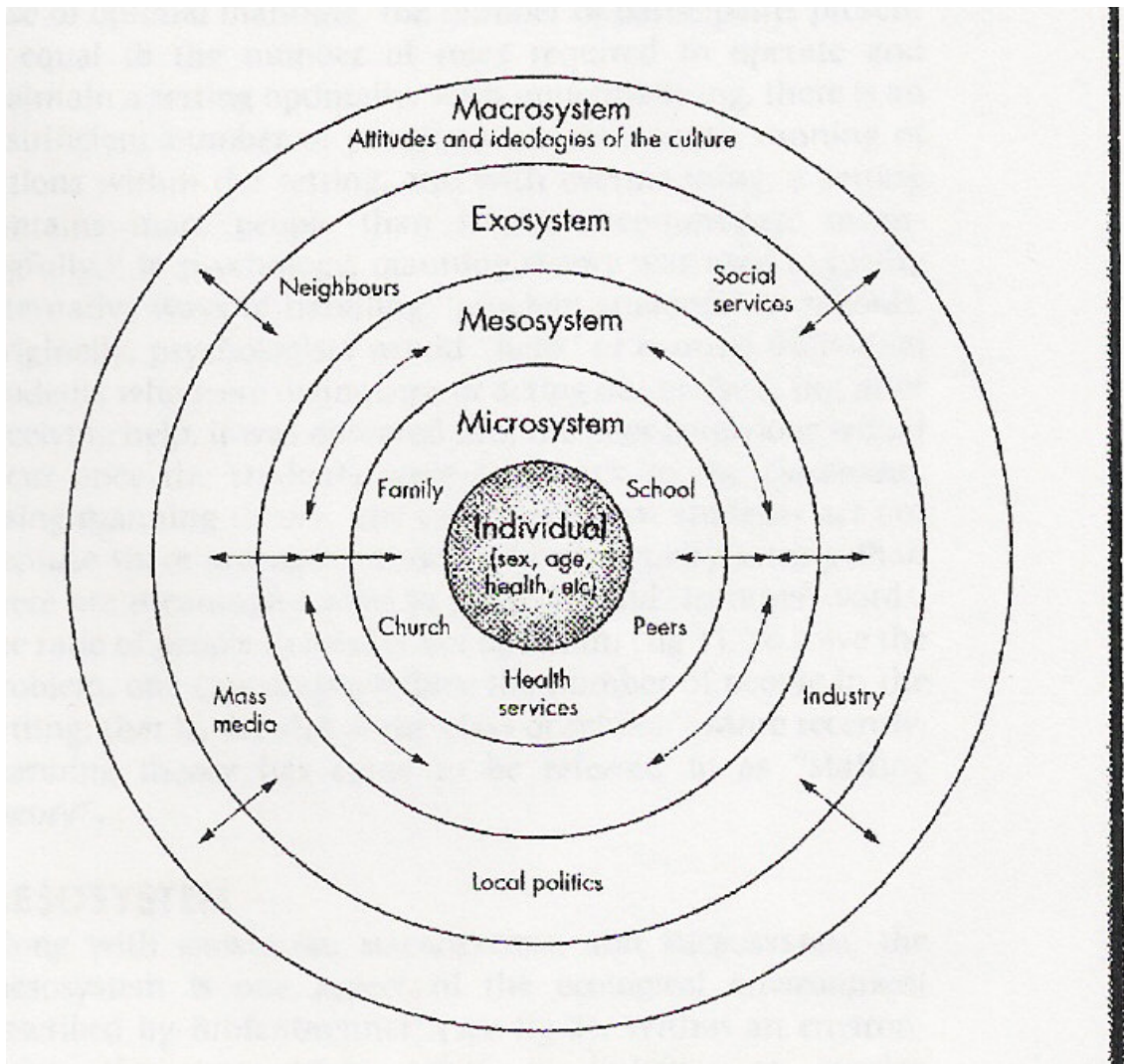


Figure 1- Social Ecological Framework

3.1.1 Microsystem

The microsystem is the most proximal context that a developing individual participates in directly (51). Simply stated, the microsystem is a face-to-face influence in a specific setting (48). It includes an individual's immediate situation, the connection between the people in the situation, the nature of the connection and the influence of all of these on the developing person at hand (52). The activity, roles and interpersonal relations that are experienced by the adolescent are nested within the microsystem (50). The adolescent's immediate family and peer group are included in the microsystem. Both of the above mentioned groups have a strong influence on the behavior of the adolescent. It is in this microsystem that the bi-directional influences have the greatest impact on the developing adolescent (50).

3.1.2 Mesosystem

Essentially, the mesosystem is a group of microsystems. A mesosystem can be defined as the interrelationships among two or more settings in which the adolescent is involved or actively participates (48,50,51). A linkage or overlap can often be observed in the mesosystem. For example, an adolescent's relationship with his or her school is very influential, as is their relationship with their peer group while in school. These relationships assist with the adolescent's development by teaching and preparing the individual for future change. This mesosystem can have both positive and negative influences on the developing person.

3.1.3 Exosystem

The exosystem is more removed from the adolescent than the micro- and mesosystem. An exosystem is one or more settings that do not directly involve the developing individual as an active participant but the events that occur here do affect the person (50). For example, the decisions made by the school board, parental social groups or media influences are all part of the exosystem. These events have an influence on adolescents, even though they are not active in the situation. The exosystem does not consider immediate situations in which the individual is involved; instead, it considers the forces within the larger social system, in which the adolescent is involved (48).

3.1.4 Macrosystem

The macrosystem is the outermost layer of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model. This level does not directly involve the adolescent; however, its influence still has an impact, similar to that of the exosystem. The macrosystem can be defined as the entire network of nested, interconnected systems within a setting (52). It is comprised of the cultural values, social norms and laws of all the other three spheres (50). Overall, the macrosystem considers patterns of ideology and organization that characterize a particular society or social group. It may describe the culture or social context of various social groups. An example of a macrosystem is a well-to-do family versus a less fortunate family (52). Cultural beliefs found in the macrosystem have an effect on the microsystem as well, again looking at the bi-directional aspect of this theoretical model (48).

3.1.5 Summary

The proposed study examining a daughter's relationship with her father and its effect on her perception of body image and her diet will provide data on the nature of this particular family relationship and whether or not it has an effect on the daughter's diet and body image. This framework was chosen to interpret this research based on the interactional nature of the model. An adolescent is a very vulnerable individual and easily influenced. This model allows the researcher to visualize the varying levels of influence and allows for better understanding of the behavior of the adolescent. For example, the adolescent female has a relationship with her father; this is the microsystem. In this microsystem, the greatest impact on the adolescent exists; therefore, her development is influenced by her father more significantly than other factors such as peers, school, the media, etc. That is not to say that these factors are not influential. They are influential and they may be conflicting with the information provided by her father, or another family member. It is because of these multiple influences that the Ecological Framework is applicable to this study.

Along with this relationship is the relationship between the daughter and her friends, her relationship with her school and what she is taught there, which is the mesosystem.

Without being actively involved, the daughter is influenced by the school board. For instance a decision made by the board to remove all less healthy foods from her school will affect her. She is also influenced by her father's work and her parent's social group. All of the above are included in the young girl's exosystem. Then, finally, the macrosystem of this young girl is the culture in all other systems, for example how her

parents raise her or what norms her father has established. It is evident that a child's development is not clear cut or linear. There are a number of influential relationships which help to shape this individual and her behavior.

4.0 Methodology

4.1 Research Design

The qualitative research design of phenomenology will be used for this study.

Phenomenology focuses on the subjective experience as a means to seek understanding of the life of people (46). Phenomenology is holistic in nature and collects information on the realities of life from those involved in those realities (53). It focuses on the perceptions of individuals. Individuals can only experience life if they are aware of these perceptions (37). This design allows participants to describe their experiences as they view them, regardless of how these experiences may be categorized or theorized by others (54). Phenomenology will allow the study subjects to speak freely about their experiences in their relationship with body image. Phenomenology will focus on an understanding of how effective this relationship is and how it influences the daughter's life and development.

4.2 Subject Selection

Due to the nature of phenomenological research, 10 adolescents were selected to participate to the current study. Purposive sampling in conjunction with recruitment was used to select participants for this study. Purposive sampling refers to involving participants who have experience with the phenomena being studied (42). In this case, adolescents at the local high school were recruited to participate. Once letters were sent to the principal at the high school (**Appendix A**) and its respective school board (**Appendix B**) and written permission was obtained, the researcher gave a short presentation to various classes at the local high school. After the presentation, each

female member of the class was given a copy of a recruitment letter for themselves asking for their consideration to participate in the study (**Appendix C**), as well as a letter for their parents outlining what was being asked of their daughter (**Appendix D**). Eligible adolescents were at a level in that they had no diagnosed cognitive, speech, or language delays that would prevent them from participating in this study. The recruitment letter requested that interested adolescents contact the researcher by telephone or email, once consent was obtained from their parents.

Seventy-five females were given recruitment letters. Only fifteen females contacted the researcher showing interest in participating or with questions. Three of the fifteen girls did not meet the criteria as they did not have a relationship with their father. Once ten adolescents had agreed to participate, the selection ceased.

4.2.1 Inclusion Criteria

- Subjects are females aged 15-18 years old
- Subjects must have a relationship or involvement with their father or a secondary male caregiver
- Subjects are English speaking
- Subjects have no diagnosed cognitive, speech or language delays

4.2.2 Exclusion Criteria

- Subject has a diagnosed cognitive, speech, or language delay, as this would make it more difficult for participation in an interview

4.3 Data Collection

Once the subject agreed to participate in the study, she was sent an information package.

The package contained various letters and documents for the participants and their

parents. The information package included: an information sheet outlining the study for the participants (**Appendix E**), an information sheet for their parents (**Appendix F**), a free and informed consent letter (**Appendix G**) and a copy of the interview guide (**Appendix H**), as requested by the school board. All participants were then contacted via e-mail by the researcher to set up the interview sessions.

4.3.1 Participants

All participants were female, as set out in the inclusion criteria of the study. The average age of the participant was 17 years. Ages ranged from 16-18 years old with the participants being in grades 10-12. All participants lived at home with either both or one of their parents, and attended the local high school. No diagnosed eating disorders were present, or any other chronic conditions. All girls were actively involved in their high school, and their community. All girls enjoyed staying active and participating in various outdoor and physical activities.

4.3.2 Mock Interview

To prepare for the in-depth interviews, the researcher held two mock interview sessions. These mock interviews allowed the researcher to develop her interview skills as well as how to build a rapport with the participant. Each interview was video recorded and reviewed by Mr. Desmond Coombs. Once the interviews were reviewed, the researcher was given feedback on both positive aspects of the interview as well as ways to improve to get the most data from the study participants.

4.3.3 Interview

Data was collected using in-depth interviews. This data collection method is recognized as the most effective method in phenomenological research (53). The initial interview lasted approximately 30 minutes with each participant, with their being a range in interview length depending on how much the girls had to say. The literature agrees that interviews with young individuals and adolescents should not exceed 45-60 minutes as these individuals are used to being in situations where they regularly change location (41). Not only was the conversation during the interview important, but the non-verbal cues also spoke to the participants' experience. An interview checklist (**Appendix J**) was used for this purpose. The interviewer took field notes and documented gestures and non-verbal cues to help assist in data analysis.

Parents were not present during the interview, nor were any other adults. This was to ensure that the adolescents' responses were not influenced. The participants were given the choice to have the interview conducted in their home, at their school, or at a neutral area of their choice. Permitting the participant to choose the location of the interview allowed for increased comfort as well as less intimidation from the researcher.

All interviews took place at the local high school, in a private office provided to the researcher by the principal. All participants were aware of their interview time, so at no time were they signaled out or called to their interview. All interviews were pre-arranged by the researcher and the participant prior to the researcher's going to the school. As it was quite difficult to meet with these girls during class time, and outside of class, member-checking conveniently took place via e-mail. Each participant was sent their

personal transcript via e-mail and then responded to the researcher about whether or not they were satisfied with the content of their interview. All participants were satisfied and data analysis continued.

All interviews were tape recorded with the permission of the participants and then transcribed by the researcher. Participants were informed at the beginning of the interview that they could request to turn off the tape-recorder at any time during the interview should they feel uncomfortable. The researcher allowed flexibility to the interviews and made sure that the participants knew that they were in control and that they could end the interview should they become overwhelmed at any point. This was not necessary as all ten interviews ran smoothly.

4.3.4. Interview Guide

The interview guide used for this research was developed based on the findings from the current literature of relevant topics. As the interview had a conversational, semi-structured form, some adolescents required more prompting than others; therefore, the specific questions used varied between participants and were based on the responses and experiences of the adolescent. An interview guide is essential in directing the research as it allows for flexibility with the adolescents' answers. The categories of questions were based on the categories identified as important based on the literature review: body image, dieting habits, family influence, family relationship, and the father-daughter relationship.

4.3.5 Consent and Authorization

Prior to the interview, participants and parents were given a copy of a free and informed consent letter, as well as a letter indicating what was expected of the participants including risks and potential harms. This is an extremely important step in the interview process as all participants are under the legal age of consent. Once the adolescent was in the interview office, the process was discussed again. The participant had the signed copy of the informed consent letter, the researcher then signed the letter and with that the interview proceeded. As this is a sensitive issue, the adolescents were reassured that all information they disclosed was going to be kept confidential, and that at no point would their teachers, parents, or friends be made aware of what they had said. The adolescent was also told that there were no right or wrong answers, and they were expected to answer truthfully to their experience and to the best of their ability.

4.4 Data Analysis

In qualitative research, data analysis is an on-going process which starts at the beginning of data collection, and its completed once no new information is identified (45). The initial step in data analysis was transcribing the interview audiotapes. All ten interview tapes were approximately 30 minutes in length and were transcribed by the researcher verbatim. Following each transcription, each transcript was read and the researcher followed all while the tape recorded interview played. This read through allowed the researcher to verify the transcripts and make changes if an error was noted. It also allowed the researcher to get a better grasp of what interview participants were saying.

The transcribed interviews were then analyzed by hand, as no computer software was available to the researcher. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. This process consists of reviewing the data from each interview, identifying themes, and then coding and categorizing them (37). As the transcripts were read through, categories or themes were identified. Once data was placed in the appropriate theme, coding took place. The researcher created codes based on information identified in the transcripts as important. These codes were then used to identify the sub-themes or narrower topic areas which were lifted from the larger identified themes. These sub-themes then became the main focus of analysis and meaningful quotations were selected.

4.5 Ethical Issues

This study was designed in an effort to minimize any possible ethical issues that may be encountered in the research process.

All participants and their parents or guardians were provided with an outline of the study prior to the adolescents' agreement to participate. Parents and participants were provided with contact information of the researcher and were encouraged to ask any questions concerning this research. The researcher obtained consent from all parents or guardians of the participating girls prior to the beginning of the interview process.

As this study may be a sensitive issue for some participants, an outside party was available should the adolescent require someone to speak to further. Mr. Desmond

Coombs, a clinical psychologist at the local hospital was available should a serious issue or any concern arise during the interviews.

Member-checking with the participants ensured that what had been recorded was a true representation of the adolescent's experience. All participants will receive a copy of the summary of results from this study.

The names of participants do not appear in the transcribed information. All participants were asked to choose a pseudonym which has been used throughout this study. The participants, the researcher, and the thesis supervisor are the only ones to have read the full transcripts. Verbatim interviews are not reported in the research results, only select quotes have been used making it difficult for the participants to be identified.

The researcher was required to submit an application to the Mount Saint Vincent University Research Ethics Board, as well as a written letter outlining the study to the respective high school, and its mothering school board. Mount Saint Vincent University (**Appendix K**), the high school principal (**Appendix L**), and the school board (**Appendix M**) provided written ethical approval for this study to be conducted by the researcher. A copy of this study will be made available to both the high school and its school board.

The researcher will store all transcriptions, documents and other data related to the project in a locked cabinet for 5 years after the research has been completed.

5.0 Results

5.1 Interview Participants

5.1.1 Participant Profiles

The adolescent females who took part in these interviews ranged in age from 16-18 years old. They lived at home with either one or both of their parents. All of the participants live in Grand Falls-Windsor, a small town in Newfoundland. They were all students at the high school in town which is a school for grades 10-12. Most participants were actively involved in their school, while others enjoyed activities outside of the school setting.

Profiles of the young women who participated in the personal, face to face interviews are presented in this section. Each profile, as developed by the researcher based on information provided by the participants, provides a brief description of the individuals. The young women's identities are protected with the pseudonyms that they chose.

Samantha

Samantha is a 16 year old female who is in grade 11. She lives at home with her mother and father. She is an active teenager who is very involved with cadets where she participates competitively. She enjoys being outside, sewing and playing the guitar.

Amy

Amy is 16 years old and is in grade 10. She lives at home with both of her parents. She is a member of her high school volleyball team which is highly competitive. Amy also enjoys horseback riding, swimming and spending time with her friends.

Tanya

Tanya is 17 years old. She is currently completing grade 11. Tanya has two brothers who attend university in another community. She lives at home with her mother and father who both work. She is an active member of her high school volleyball and basketball teams. In her spare time, Tanya enjoys watching television and movies, reading, as well as spending time with her friends.

Molly

Molly is a 17 year old female. She attends grade 11. She lives at home with her parents, while her brother is attending university in another city. She is very involved with her school, and her community. In school she is a member of her basketball team, competitive cheerleading and sits on the Student Council and the Yearbook Committee. Outside of school, Molly enjoys drawing, sewing, painting, shopping, dancing and she is also involved in Girl Guides as a leader.

Jessica

Jessica is 16 years old and is a grade 11 student. She lives at home with her father, while her other siblings live with her mother. In her spare time, Jessica enjoys listening to music, jogging, dancing and spending time with her friends.

Monica

Monica is an athletic 17 year old, grade 11 student. She is a member of the volleyball and basketball teams in high school. She is an active member of the provincial volleyball program. Monica lives at home with her parents and her younger brother. In her spare time she enjoys playing sports and traveling.

Liz

Liz is a 17 year old female who is in her final year of high school. She is an only child and lives at home with her mother and father. She is a member of her high school cheerleading squad. Outside of school, Liz enjoys spending time with children, reading, watching television and playing on her computer.

Erin

Erin is in her graduating year of high school and is 18 years old. She lives at home with her mother and father; however, her father works out of the province for the majority of the year. She has an older brother who is attending university. In school she is a member of the basketball team, choir and the math team. She sits on the Yearbook Committee as well as the Grad Steering Committee. Outside of school Erin enjoys playing sports, music and French.

Ella

Ella is 17 years old and is in grade 11. She has a large family and lives at home with her mother and father. In her spare time, Ella enjoys spending time with her friends, reading and driving. To keep active, Ella enjoys going to the YMCA, walking and skating.

Rose

Rose is a 17 year old, grade 12 student at her high school. She is the youngest of three sisters, and lives at home with one sister and her mother and father. To stay physically active, Rose enjoys going to the YMCA, curling, volleyball and skating. In her spare time she enjoys photography, dancing and scrap-booking.

5.1.2 Participant Interaction

The way in which participants interact with the interviewer has an effect on the outcome of the information provided. In the case of these interviews, all ten participants were comfortable with the interviewer and good interaction was noted. All participants spoke in a clear manner and did not exhibit anxiety. A good rapport was established immediately when the participant met with the researcher for the first time, allowing for the girls to feel confident in reliving their experience without being judged. The participants had no problem opening up and sharing their experiences surrounding body image, diet and relationships with their fathers.

The interviewer used an interview checklist to monitor the interactions with regards to various factors including posture, facial expression, general body movements, and quality of speech and overall mood of all participants. At the beginning of each interview, each participant was informed that the interview was being recorded. This did not change the amount of discussion in the interview.

For the most part, all participants were comfortable from beginning to end of the interview. Most had a comfortable posture, pleasant facial expression and used a normal conversational tone. In a couple of instances, the participants expressed anxiety and episodes of blushing but once the initial questions were asked, they eased into the interview and opened up to the interviewer. At no point did any participant request that the tape recorder be turned off, nor did any choose not to answer a question.

Member checking proved to be beneficial. Participants were given a chance to read their transcripts and add, or remove, information from the transcript as they reviewed their experiences.

5.2 Coded Data

Quotes were extracted from the ten transcripts and placed into themes. Five main themes emerged: body image, dieting, relationships, influences and pressures and communication. **Table 1** is a representation of the theme outline that was created from the analysis of the transcribed data. The five main themes include: body image with 107 quotes, diet with 57 quotes, relationships with 73 quotes, influences/pressures 213 quotes and communication having 123 quotes.

Table 1- General Themes and Number of Quotes/Theme

# of Quotes per Theme	Theme
107	Body Image
57	Diet
73	Relationships
213	Influences and Pressures
123	Communications

From these themes, more specific sub-themes were generated. These sub-themes can be seen in **Table 2**.

Table 2- Sub-themes and Number of Quotes/Sub-theme

# of Quotes per Sub-theme	Sub-themes
	Body Image
45	<i>Definition</i>
13	<i>Importance</i>
14	<i>Feeling towards self</i>
35	<i>Dissatisfaction</i>
	Diet
8	<i>Definition</i>
16	<i>Frequency/duration</i>
24	<i>Methods of dieting</i>
9	<i>Healthy eating</i>
	Relationships
23	<i>Parents (general)</i>
1	<i>Peers</i>
5	<i>Mother</i>
36	<i>Father</i>
8	<i>Conflict in the family</i>
	Influences & Pressures
56	<i>Peers</i>
30	<i>Parents (general)</i>
38	<i>Dieting habits of parents</i>
20	<i>Comments made by parents</i>
35	<i>Media</i>
8	<i>Sports</i>
9	<i>Going against the norm</i>
17	<i>Other</i>
	Communication
26	<i>Discussions</i>
59	<i>Comments made by parents</i>
31	<i>Comments made by peers</i>
7	<i>Health information</i>

As each transcript was read thoroughly, quotes that were relevant to the research questions were highlighted and coded. A code was applied to each sub-theme for easy

identification. A total of 573 quotes were extracted from all ten transcripts. These were sorted into thematic computer files. Some quotes were sorted into more than one theme or sub-theme. The number of quotes per category ranged from one to as many as 59. Not all quotes were used in further discussion, as only the most profound were chosen as relevant and representative of the data.

5.2.1. Organizing the Data

Direct verbatim quotes from participants form the basis for the presentation and interpretation of the results of this study to determine adolescent girls' thoughts on the perception of their body image and dieting habits in accordance with their relationship with their father.

In order to manage the 573 quotes extracted from the transcripts, it was important to organize the themes and sub-themes. Themes and sub-themes are presented and discussed in the same order as seen in the Interview Guide which was created based on the order as discussed in the Literature Review (**Section 4.0**). Once this order had been established, each theme file containing all quotes relevant to that theme and its sub-themes were printed from the computer, as having a hard copy from which to work made it easier to determine which quotes were relevant and which would be used to illustrate certain points. Not all of the 573 quotes were used in the Results Section (**Section 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8 and 5.9**) for a number of reasons. In many instances, quotes and ideas were of a repetitive nature. In most cases, only one participant's quote was used, even though more than one participant shared the same idea. Although numerous sub-themes emerged

during data analysis, not all sub-themes will be included in the presentation of the final results. The researcher chose only those themes that were pertinent to the research questions being asked.

5.3 Body Image

5.3.1 Definition

This initial theme emerged from the very first question that was asked of the participants about what body image meant or means to them. From this question came a number of, simple to complex responses. Many participants, such as Samantha thought of body image typically as how you look.

Umm... just pretty much what you look like... ummm... well your body shape and size (Samantha)

Other participants thought of it more as not only how you look, but how you portray yourself and how others see you.

Umm...to me it means how I feel about myself, like if I feel good or if I feel bad about the way I present myself (Monica)

I guess its just the way you look, and the way people see you .But mostly the way you see yourself because I don't really think it matters what other people think of you. So yeah, like how you see yourself. (Liz)

Ahh..[laughs]...I don't know...just umm...like...to look good or more so how people think of you and like how you think about yourself and your body. (Amy)

Jessica and others associated feelings with their definitions of body image. A consistent pattern of how they felt about themselves was just as important as how they looked This appeared to be the theme that existed from analysis of the interviews.

Its just like how you portray yourself, like how you feel and stuff like that.
(Jessica)

Only one girl associated body image with not only her looks, but with herself as a whole person.

I think its like your overall perspective of yourself. Like how you look and how your features are... your whole self I guess. (Rose)

5.3.2 Importance

When it came to discussing the importance of body image, many issues were brought up by these adolescents, in their responses to questions asked by the researcher, including: if body image is important to them, when it became important to them, and if it is more important to them now versus when they were younger. In terms of the importance of body image, all participants stated that, to an extent, body image was important to them, but for various reasons. When asked if body image was important to her, Samantha was concerned about health issues related to being overweight.

It is to an extent. Like I don't want to be very skinny but I don't want to be overweight either because it can cause health problems. (Samantha)

Other girls considered body image to be important based solely on their looks.

Yeah. Like a lot. You can't be going around looking like a slob. [laughs] (Amy)

Umm...it kind of is. Like I want to look good, but it isn't a big deal, like I wouldn't go to school without make-up on or anything. (Jessica)

Erin and Ella both had multi-dimensional ideas of what body image meant to them. Both participants indicated that body image included both how they looked and felt.

Ahh...just to an extent. You have to be comfortable with who you are. But you don't have to over-elaborate or do things because people are telling you to. (Erin)

It is to a certain extent. But I like to just feel better rather than looking a certain way. (Ella)

All participants stated that body image was important to them; however, the age at which it became important varied greatly. Six girls suggested that it became important around the age of 12 or 13 years, or upon entering junior high school.

When I was 12 or 13. Well obviously when you are younger you think about it. But, you know...just when you hit 12 or 13 people are thinking, well now you are entering high school and you are worried about what people are going to think of you and what boys are going to think of you. (Liz)

When I started junior high...so when I was 13. (Monica)

Erin believed that body image only became important to her this year as it is her last year of high school.

Umm...my last year of high school (now). You know, you want to look good and you want to fit in that grad dress. I haven't overly cared much about it before... (Erin)

Although the majority of participants started to worry about their body image when they reached adolescence, Molly was on the opposite end of the spectrum. She says that body image, mainly style was important to her since the age of two.

My mom said that when I was like 2, I used to be concerned and like I wouldn't go out unless I liked what I wore! [laughs] (Molly)

5.3.3 Feelings Towards Self

The adolescent females had both positive and negative thoughts when asked how they feel about their own body. The majority of them appeared content with the way they look. Most say they had good days and bad days.

Although Tanya said she generally feels good about her body, she states that there are some days when she feels unhappy.

Ah... [laughs]. Sometimes I'm happy, sometimes I'm not... Sometimes I'm happy because like, I like my shape... I'm not like flat or I'm not like... I don't know.... but yet sometimes I just want to lose weight on my stomach and stuff... (Tanya)

Rose was very open with her thoughts on her own body. She agreed that how she felt about herself varied from day to day.

Umm... I don't think like... I don't know... Umm... to describe my body... its more like I'm average but to me it doesn't feel like I'm average. Like it feels like its bigger than average sometimes. Like there are certain things that I wear sometimes that I think look perfect, makes me look skinny and tall. But then there are other things that I wear and I think "what did I eat today?" I think its more of a daily basis thing, like when you wake up what kind of mood you are in but on a good day... (Rose)

Although all girls agreed that their own body image varied from day to day, two of the adolescents interviewed were very strong in saying that they are happy with the way their body is now. Erin described her feelings towards her body as being very happy and realizing that not everyone has to be the same.

The thing is, everyone has a different body type, and when I was younger that frustrated me that I wasn't like everyone else. But now I realize, like I'm tall, I'm six foot, I'm big but you know... everyone is different. But I'm happy with the way I am, so ... (Erin)

Molly is very happy about her body. She enjoys the way she looks and presents herself.

Umm... well I like the way I look because I like being tall. I'm not super skinny and I'm not overweight at all. And I stand out, and I like that. (Molly)

Even though others expressed a different opinion about their body shape, they were still content with the way it is.

Well...I don't think its perfect...but I don't think I'm overweight or anything like that either, I'm pretty content with it right now. (Jessica)

Well, I feel a lot better about it because I know that I am trying to reach my ideal goal. So...right now It's not how I want it to be but I am happy with the way I am. (Ella)

Although six of the adolescents were content with their bodies, three participants stated that they would like to change things about themselves. For example, going to the gym to tone up or losing weight appeared to be a common theme. Two participants indicated that they were going to the gym on a regular basis to improve how they felt about their bodies.

Ahh...basically I think I'm not overweight but I'm not like really skinny either, I'm kind of in-between. And I like to stay in shape, not be just like skinny. I don't want to be skinny and out of shape. So I want to keep going to the "Y" and work out, to get my body into shape. (Samantha)

I'm working on it. [laughs] I want to be physically fit, athletic like I said before, not skinny...that's my goal for the summer. I just started going to the gym. I do feel good about it now, but I feel like it could be better. But...I like myself now...I like the way I look and the way I portray myself, the way I feel...yeah that's just another goal I'm working on. (Monica)

Not all of the adolescents interviewed were happy with their body. Four participants expressed negative and unhappy thoughts when asked how they felt about their body right now.

Well I wouldn't say I'm just right because I know that where I did gain like 10 lbs in the past year, I would like to have that off again but I know that isn't going to happen because I'm getting older and it just isn't going to happen. I just have to keep trying....just keep trying... (Liz)

5.3.4 Dissatisfaction

Many of the girls suggested that at some point in their lives they have experienced this feeling of dissatisfaction with the way they looked. Monica expressed her feelings of dissatisfaction when she was younger and compared herself to older females.

Umm...well...it was kind of when I was younger and I would see older people. Like if I seen an older girl and she was skinny, I would think, "oh I want to be like her when I get older" and I'm a bit bigger now, and stuff like that. (Monica)

Erin expressed that her body dissatisfaction was brought on by herself. She was not active and that made her feel bad about herself.

Yeah. I actually think I was really, really bad. Well, I was really lazy and I didn't do anything, so then I did something about it. I started playing sports, that really made a difference. Then I got older and more mature, so it made a difference. (Erin)

Similar to their expression of their feelings towards their own body image, half of the participants suggested that body dissatisfaction varied from day to day.

Yeah and I still do sometimes. But then I just don't look in the mirror or I'll go out for a walk or something like that. Sometimes I feel good, and sometimes I feel fat. (Jessica)

Umm... sometimes I have. But it wasn't something that continued on. Some days I feel like yeah I'm a good weight, but other times I think I'm gaining weight, but I don't really do anything about it. (Amy)

Not only were the adolescents asked if they experienced body dissatisfaction, they were also asked how it made them feel. The participants made similar comments that it was an upsetting feeling which made them feel worse.

It kind of makes you feel depressed because all of these people are saying you have to be this weight, and then umm...you're not this weight so you are just kinda like "oh...well then. (Samantha)

Umm... well... I get really upset and I just didn't know what to do. I knew it wasn't going to disappear overnight or anything like that. But... I just had to realize that it will take time but if you are determined that you are going to do it, then you are going to get in shape unless there is an actual medical problem. But, I was really bad at the time. (Ella)

5.4 Diet

5.4.1 Definition

To better understand the experiences of the participants, it was important to get background information. Not only was the definition of body image important, it was also necessary to understand their concept of dieting. Many gave definitions of what dieting meant to them with all participants relating diet to weight loss.

umm...a restriction of food until you are happy with the results. That is, if you wanted to lose weight. (Monica)

Eating healthy to lose weight. (Liz)

Umm... ... your everyday consumption of ahh... foods... whether its calories or whatever. (Amy)

Limiting your food to lose weight. (Molly)

Ella expanded her definition to include the restrictions that some individuals put on themselves when they diet, and she expressed that she didn't agreed with this.

Umm... just watching what you are eating. Not so much like... well a lot of people think dieting is like starving yourself but I think it's more like just watching what's in your food and watching your weight. (Ella)

Rose's thoughts on dieting were quite different from those of the other participants. Her definition of dieting was broader and included goal setting.

I think it would be like... it's a goal for yourself. You make a goal, its not necessarily you can't eat this or that, but it's a goal like I want to lose so much weight in a month or a week. It's more like a goal setting than anything else.
(Rose)

5.4.2 Frequency and Duration

The majority of adolescents interviewed had attempted to diet at least once in their life so far. Dieting is seen as the norm in this young population, and these adolescents have conformed to what is expected of them. In many cases, participants had attempted healthy eating, while others had tried more restricted diets. Only two of the participants had not dieted at all. Liz speaks of cutting down on junk food in an attempt to lose weight.

hmm...not necessarily a diet but I try to cut down on junk food and stuff. Like I don't say "ok guys, I'm on a diet" but if we go to the store, like I said, I'd probably try to get something more healthy as a snack. (Liz)

Tanya agrees in that healthy eating is her approach to dieting; however, she insists that it is merely an on-again, off-again strategy for her.

Well, I try to eat healthy all the time so...whenever I can. I don't know, I'll go on and off [laughs]. Sometimes I care, sometimes I don't. (Tanya)

Only one participant discussed being on numerous diets, with some being very restrictive. She speaks of counting calories and being on a very low calorie diet as well as using various over-the-counter weight loss products:

(1)I'm always dieting, well trying to. [laughs] Wow. Umm...I'd say at least 20 times.

(2) Umm... I haven't used them [protein shakes] in the past 3 or 4 months. But I have used them as a diet type thing. But, I got sick of them after awhile.

(3) ...That was more of the dangerous ones, like with pills and stuff. A pill that tricked your mind into thinking that you're full, and I did it for a week... (Rose)

Both Amy and Molly said that they had never attempted to diet. Both agree that they eat healthy on a regular basis but it is not for the purpose of losing weight.

No, not really, never...I'm not sure if I tried to once or not. But, I know I should try to eat more fruit, but it isn't a diet kind of thing. (Amy)

No, never. I eat pretty healthy all the time because I don't eat meat. So, I eat like a salad every day for dinner and stuff. (Molly)

Most of the participants agreed that their 'diets' only lasted for a minimal amount of time, ranging from one week to two months. Those who spoke of eating healthier expressed that this was a choice that they have made in their lives and that it is an on-going thing but not for the purpose of losing weight.

Another issue addressed was the initiation of dieting within the sub-group of participants that had attempted this practice. It appeared to be around the same time as body image became important to them, around the time of entering a new school (i.e. junior high or high school) and reaching adolescence.

I think it was probably in grade 9. (Rose)

Umm...when I was 14. (Ella)

5.4.3 Methods of Dieting

The participants discussed not only if they had dieted, but also methods used by themselves, as well as by friends or acquaintances. As previously discussed, nine of the adolescents used healthy eating as a method to maintain or lose weight.

Hmm...not necessarily a diet but I try to cut down on junk food and stuff. (Liz)

I try to eat healthy but I haven't been on a strict diet or anything. (Tanya)

Erin is taking it one step at a time. She has chosen to eliminate one less healthy item, and once she has perfected that step, she says she will make another healthy change to her diet.

Not really. But since this is my last year and stuff, I've been trying. Like I eat more fruits and vegetables and stuff. I'm trying to take it step by step but not going overboard. Like I stopped drinking carbonated drinks, and its been a month now [laughs]. So I'm just taking it slow... (Erin)

Rose disclosed that her dieting has been very restrictive. She has cut back significantly on calories as well as used different products and fad diets.

(1)I just cut back on my food. Like it wasn't really a diet, it was just what I thought was a diet back then. Ok well it was more like let's not eat... but I did eat. I just didn't have like snacks in between. It was more like I didn't know what to do.

(2)Like I'm on this 1300 kcal /day type thing, so I can only have a certain number of calories a day...

(3)I just... I used them as a meal. Like I used Ensure and stuff too...but they were gross... very nasty. But then I thought, this is what I got to do, so I did. It was a replacement for a meal. So in the mornings if I was late to school, I would just drink one and then I wouldn't eat again until supper time or something because I thought that was enough. It was one a day type thing, not with a meal. (Rose)

Jessica admitted to taking extremes with her dieting habits when she was teased about gaining weight. She stopped eating for a short period of time and then decided just to cut out specific foods from her diet.

I just stopped eating a lot, mostly stopped eating fatty foods and stuff. (Jessica)

Although the methods used to diet by the participants were not extreme, when asked about methods teenage girls use to diet today their answers did not merely include healthy eating. Their responses included very restrictive diets, the use of over-the-counter weight loss products, fad diets and disordered eating, and in many cases the development of anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa. All ten participants interviewed said that they are friends with, or know of, someone who has stopped eating to lose weight.

Well...I see girls in school who don't eat at all and who are anorexic and stuff...
(Rose)

Umm, well I have a lot of friends who just eat really healthy. They don't eat take out and they don't eat junk food or anything. And then again I see people in the school who don't eat at all, and are anorexic [laughs]. (Erin)

Um... like some people just stop eating. More just exercise a lot more. Some people throw up. A lot of people just cut out chips and pop and fries and stuff like that. More so healthy eating. (Jessica)

Well I know a big factor is like going bulimic... like after everything they eat, they throw up. Or just not eating at all. (Amy)

Ella and Molly both spoke about females using fad diets to lose weight. Ella discussed fad diets that they had discussed in school, while Molly is a part of a pageant network and has heard young girls talking about different ways they stay slim:

Umm... well... I don't know if there is really a name on it but people just call it the Soup Diet. People just make this certain kind of soup and they eat it for like 7 days straight, then off for 3, then they are on it again. So a lot of people I know do that. [laughs]. Well in class sometime we discussed some different diets like the Aitkin's Diet, and a few other ones. But that soup diet is really popular here.
(Ella)

Well there is like the no junk food. And like... at the pageant I was at a couple of weeks ago there was some people there.... They had an all chocolate bar diet. They ate 5 a day, and that was it. And there was another girl there on a different diet; she had a can of tuna for lunch and a half a chicken breast for supper and that's all she ate... (Molly)

5.4.4 *Healthy Eating*

With the participants often mentioning “healthy eating”, it was imperative for the researcher to delve more deeply into this area and define what healthy eating meant to these adolescents. All participants associated healthy eating with limiting or excluding junk food from their diet as well as eating more fruits and vegetables.

Just like...instead of eating chips all the time, I'll try to change it up and eat a banana or something like that... (Tanya)

Like...I just eat a lot of fruit and vegetables and stuff. And I get my dad to cook me meals instead of just sticking something in the oven like a chicken burger or something. (Jessica)

Tanya was the only participant to mention healthy eating as a health benefit. She expressed her concern with her diet and the incidence of heart disease in her family.

I don't know. Like, just cut back on the junk, and cut back on fries and stuff like that. Eating potato instead of fries and just stuff like that. Especially because we have heart disease in our family so mom will encourage me not to eat a lot of greasy foods and stuff. (Tanya)

Only one participant discussed Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating in our conversation about healthy eating:

Umm... no snacking [laughs]... and well... umm... just like making sure there is a balance of Canada's Food Guide because it is so hard to get a spread of it throughout the day or whatever, and just follow through that. (Ella)

Healthy eating and overweight go hand-in-hand and most times it is the fear of being overweight that triggers the healthy eating and the dieting, therefore, the researcher found it necessary to investigate what these adolescents thought was considered overweight.

When asked to define overweight, the responses varied. Both Rose and Jessica indicated

that being overweight was associated with a particular weight, but both have very different ideas of what this particular weight was.

Like 200 or 300 pounds. (Rose)

Ummm... if you're like... 170 pounds... (Jessica)

5.5 Relationships

The adolescents shared their opinions about their relationships with their parents when questioned by the researcher. As these young females still live at home with their parents, they are still fairly dependent on them and to some extent their parents still play an important role in their lives. The relationship with both parents was discussed in general, and more specifically, the girls' relationship with their fathers was explored.

5.5.1 Parents

The participants were asked to describe their relationship with their parents in general. In all cases, the girls stated that they had a good relationship with their parents.

Umm...the relationship with my parents is pretty good. I'm an only child, so I get a lot of the attention or whatever. We argue sometimes but that's just typical teenager stuff but not too much. (Samantha)

Yeah...we're really close. I tell them just about...pretty much everything. I don't tell them stuff they don't want to hear but...I just tell them everything....mostly my mom. I'm close to my dad too, it's just...we talk about a lot of stuff and there's lots of times when we just sit down...some of my friends are like "you sit down and watch TV with your parents?" and I'm like "yeah, that's what we do..." But I guess they don't you know? (Liz)

I can talk to them about anything, I really enjoy hanging out with them. And yeah... (Tanya)

Its really good. I'm really open with my parents, I can tell them anything. Umm...we have our little arguments, we have a big family so there is always

something going on throughout the day...but I would say it's a pretty positive relationship. (Ella)

Although the girls all suggested a close relationship with their parents, some were quick to discuss the differences in their relationships with their mothers and fathers. Both Tanya and Amy spoke about the distinct difference in their relationships with their mom as compared with their dad. Both girls discussed that their relationship with their father was more lighthearted than their relationship with their mother.

Yup.[laughs] With my mom its more so that I can talk to her about anything. We're really close when it comes to anything. With my dad, we're still really close, but its more like a father-daughter relationship. Like we talk about sports and stuff that I wouldn't talk to my mom about. I don't know... (Tanya)

My mom if I wanted to talk to someone. But with my dad I'm like always play fighting with him. In that case my dad is more fun, but I can tell my mom more. (Amy)

In this study, the researcher found that more participants appeared to have a closer relationship with their father or felt equally as close to both parents.

I have a closer relationship with my dad, and I don't fight with him. I tend to argue more with my mom. (Samantha)

Well me and my dad are more alike. Mom is kinda shy and doesn't really have a lot of self confidence. Me and dad are more outgoing and outspoken and we're both athletic. If we have a goal we stick to it, whereas mom is kinda not committed to something. I find it easier to relate to dad. I think he was more like me as a child, like I am very social, very out there and have a lot of friends whereas mom was sort of shy when she was growing up. She had very strict parents, so she was, she was sheltered in that way. But dad was more out there, so I think he relates to me more and I find it easier to talk to him. He doesn't criticize me and I don't feel intimidated when I'm talking to him but with mom its just like question after question...but I find it easier to talk to dad. (Monica)

My mom and I are terrible, we are like cats and dogs, seriously. Like we don't even have time for each other. Like with my dad and me, we're perfect. Like my sisters said, he's wrapped around my finger. Its more like me and my dad are closer than me and my mom. (Rose)

Well I'm not really close with my mom but I live with my dad. We like talk, but we aren't extremely close. I tell him what's going on in my life but I won't go into details with him at all. (Jessica)

Some participants expressed their closeness to their mothers, more so than that to their fathers. When asked why this was the case, Liz stated for the simple fact that her mom was female and understood her problems more than her dad would.

I guess because she's a girl. And well my dad doesn't have as much experience with...like...periods and stuff...and weight. So mom can tell me more about stuff like that. (Liz)

On the other hand, three participants stated that they feel equally as close to both of their parents but have a different relationship with each one individually.

It depends on the situation. When it comes to sports I would never talk to my mom about it and like when it comes to like...personal stuff...I talk to my mom about it. So I guess, I'm equally as close to both of them. (Tanya)

Don't know because I talk to my mom about like stuff that happens in my life. But my dad... we spend a lot of time together. So its kind of even. [laughs] (Ella)

5.5.2 Father

One of the primary purposes of this study was to determine if there are any distinct features in a father-daughter relationship. It has already been suggested in the previous section that most participants view their relationship with their fathers as more lighthearted. This is in contrast to that with their mothers which is viewed as a more confident, trustworthy relationship. Samantha discusses how she shares the same values as her father, and that gives them a special bond.

Umm...like...he's pretty much...me and him share a lot of the same values and stuff. If I didn't like something, then he probably doesn't like it either. Like if I see

something happening and I don't agree with it, then he's like there with me, whereas my mom would be like the other way and disagree. (Samantha)

Rose finds it easier to talk to her dad, and for that reason, believes that they have a strong, positive relationship.

I would say definitely positive. Well if I wanted to talk to him about anything, like if I had anything on my mind, I would go to my dad, I would never go to my mom about it. I trust him more than I trust my mom. I feel like I know my dad more where we are involved in more things together. I'm more active with my dad when it comes to outside of the home, but with my mom its just like if I see her in the mall I'd just say "hi"... (Rose)

Two of the participants spoke of their fathers as being very encouraging. In both cases their fathers encouraged them in various aspects of their lives, thus resulting in the development of a positive relationship.

Well he's always there for me. He's really trustworthy and stuff like that. He'll let me do what I want, but he knows I'm going to do the right thing. Umm...well he encourages me to do better in school so I try to do that. (Jessica)

Well...he's always there to encourage me to do different things and try different things. And he always asks how my day was and makes sure everything is ok. He makes sure that my mind is set right for the future and stuff like that. (Ella)

All but one participant indicated that they enjoyed spending time with their fathers. In most instances, the time spent with fathers included things like watching TV, providing rides and teaching them how to drive. The participants also mentioned that during these times, they talked with their fathers about many different issues.

ahh...yeah. He takes me out driving and stuff. We go out for coffee. He's usually the one that takes me places, he's always the one to drop me off, and pick me up. And...stuff like that. (Samantha)

Yeah, well we watch TV. And if he's on the computer I'll go in and sit down and ask him about his day. I also deliver papers, so he always takes me around to do that. So that's the most time that we get to talk. (Liz)

Ahh...watch TV, like basketball games or something. We usually like talk...[laughs] and eat! We usually just talk about sports or family stuff, like about my brothers and stuff like that. (Tanya)

The researcher investigated if the participants thought that their father had an impact on their life, and if so, in what way. All participants, with the exception of one, thought that their father had a big impact on their life.

A big impact. I think my father is very good person. I think he is very well spoken and that he knows...he knows...what's what. He is very moral. I want to be like him because he is outgoing. He has a lot of promotions so far in his life. He wasn't well off when he was a kid but he went a long way and so I seen him accomplish a lot. He's happy with himself and with his life and I'd like to be like that. (Monica)

I think there is a big impact towards lots of things. Like study habits, and school and stuff. Like he's pretty smart and he encourages me to be like...be smart all around. And with sports or stuff, he wants me to be athletic. And just...that's just how he is. (Tanya)

I would say he has a big impact. He has one of the biggest impacts on me kind of a thing. If I ever needed anything or needed help with anything, he's there. He would be the one to help me out. If I ever needed help with anything, he is the one I run to. He has a big, big impact on me. (Rose)

Umm... he has a really good impact on me. He tries to guide me in the right direction or whatever. Its always been good. (Ella)

Erin was the only participant who had a different opinion than the rest. With her dad being away from home for half of the year, she expressed difficulty connecting with him, and she also indicated that he had no impact on her life at all.

(1) Not really no. We aren't very close.

(2) We're just so different. He's so quiet and keeps to himself, and I'm very outgoing and outspoken.

(3) [laughs] I don't really think he has an impact. Not really. Like...no...nothing really at all... Like if I asked my mom if I could do something, she'll always say

“ask your dad” and I just think, he’s never here anyways. I don’t even feel like he’s really raised me. I always listen to my mom, but when dad tries to play that role, I’m just like...”you didn’t really raise me.” He’s hasn’t been gone my whole life but just for the really important stuff. I’m just used to it. I couldn’t even imagine if he was home all the time. I don’t even know what it would be like..
(Erin)

5.5.3 Conflict in the Family

Conflict often arises on a regular basis in a home where a teenager lives. From the discussions with the participants in this study, conflict was not an issue in their homes. All participants said that there are little arguments within their families, but it is never anything that lasts.

Ahh...my parents never fight and I never fight with them. I can’t remember the last time I did actually. And well me and my brothers don’t usually fight because they don’t live here anymore and I only talk to them on the phone. There’s never conflict. (Tanya)

Well...umm...just like stupid little things really. It’s never anything important. Never any big arguments. And I have actually never heard my parents fight. (Ella)

My parents sometimes fight with each other, nothing big ever. Its just normal parent stuff, nothing serious. (Molly)

5.6 Influences and Pressures

Adolescence is a very influential time in one’s life. These adolescents discussed different dynamics that offer both positive and negative influences in their lives on a daily basis. It was determined by the researcher, through analysis of the raw data that the greatest influence in a young female’s life comes from three dominant areas: peers, family and the media.

5.6.1 Peers

The participants expressed many ways in which peers influenced their thoughts on body image and dieting. Some were direct, while others had an indirect impact on their opinions. Regardless of whether the influence is obvious or not, based on the opinions of participants, peers have a very strong impact on these adolescents.

Four participants indicated that entering a new school had a big influence on the way they felt about themselves. They agreed that entering a new school meant trying to fit in with the older students and make a good impression.

Then it was like you were just entering high school with all new people, and you thought that if you were skinny then everyone would like you. (Samantha)

I guess, like I said, just getting in high school and thinking, well everyone else is skinny so I want to fit in. Nobody wants to be overweight, everyone wants to be skinny ya know? (Liz)

Well we were just going from intermediate to senior high and there were a lot of older people who we saw and we just wanted to look good. [laughs] (Jessica)

Not only did the participants think it was important to impress their new schoolmates, two participants indicated that they felt it was necessary to be aware of their body image to impress their friends and to fit in.

Like... you just kind of feel like you have to look good for your friends. If not, you're like the dirt-bag of the bunch. (Amy)

Participants discussed how they compared themselves to their peers. Often this process is not intentional. It is simply a natural reaction and was evident in this study. Molly expressed how comparing herself to her friends sometimes made her feel good, while other times it made her have negative feelings towards her body.

I don't know... well if there is a characteristic about someone that I really like, then that makes me feel bad about myself, but if I think one of my characteristics are better then I feel good about myself. (Tanya)

Amy believed that social life is the biggest way in which peers influence her body image perception. She simply states that social life is essentially the only important factor when one is attending high school. And she associates having a good social life with looking a certain way.

Well the social life. In high school, your social life is everything. It doesn't matter what grades you have in school. It doesn't matter what you do, just if you have friends, then that's all that matters. When we were in primary and elementary, everyone was your friend. So, it didn't matter how you dressed or how you looked. But, now it definitely does. (Amy)

From their statements, Molly and Amy had different viewpoints. Molly stated that being an individual is what makes her have a positive image and a good friend circle, not how she dresses or how she looks.

Umm.. well a lot of people think that you have to wear certain clothes, and I used to be like that when I didn't have very many friends. I used to have to wear the jeans and the T-shirts. But since grade 7 or so I've worn different clothes and stuff. I don't let the pressures get to me at all. (Molly)

All participants commented that they felt pressure from their peers in terms of how they perceived their own body image. As with any issue, young girls like to talk to others about their concerns and thoughts on the topic. In this case, it was evident that many of the participants felt the most comfortable talking to their peers about body image and dieting.

I talk to the girls more so about body image...but I'd probably go to my friends if like...I wanted to see like...how they look and how I want to look and what they are doing with regards to fashion and stuff. We kind of compare what we know. (Monica)

I would talk to my best friend. She's helpful. (Jessica)

5.6.2 Parental Influence

It was consistently reported that their parents had exhibited some level of influence when it came to the development of their body image and their dieting habits. In fact, many of the participants suggested that their parents may contribute more influence to this development than their peers. Rose discussed her parents' dieting as well as their exercising as an influence on her.

Well, my parents diet and they go to the YMCA and stuff. They aren't big people but they aren't small people either... (Rose)

Samantha discussed genetics as an influence. She states that her mother was small when she was a teenager, so she attributes that as an influence on her size:

Same thing as my mom, like when my mom was my age, she was size 0. She was really, really tiny. And, but...she ate a lot but she didn't really gain and weight. So it runs in the family... [laughs] (Samantha)

Molly says that her mom has always taught her about healthy living, not so much about being a certain weight but about being healthy.

Umm... well my mom has always told me that I don't need to look a certain way, and she wants me to be healthy. (Molly)

The results of this study suggest that these females do experience an influence from their fathers in terms of body image development. Monica has learned her information from her father and attributes her positive body image development and good dieting habits to her father's positive influence.

And my dad has a background in body building and nutrition. So he's always been in shape, not necessarily the skinniest, but he's had a healthy lifestyle. And he feels good about himself and how much he works out and stuff. And I've seen that growing up my whole life, so that's what I go by. (Monica)

Both Rose and Ella feel that their fathers put pressure on them to stay in shape and maintain a healthy body weight.

Ahh...more pressure from my dad because he's more active and more into it. Like he's bigger than my mom, but he wants it so bad, and he wants it more than my mom and he tries his hardest. Like if I'm at the YMCA, and I notice that he hasn't been there for awhile I'll ask him. Like that's the kind of chats we have. We motivate each other. And like, I guess we kind of pressure each other too. (Rose)

But my dad always tries to get me to be active. Like if he is going for a walk, he always tries to get me to go with him. Or if we're going somewhere he'll be like "Come on, I'll race ya" and stuff. So probably my dad more. (Ella)

5.6.2.1 Parental Dieting Habits

More specifically, the question of ways in which parents actively influenced their daughters was of interest to the researcher. It was determined through various interview questions that the girls' parents' dieting habits played a big role in determining the girls' thoughts on healthy eating, as well as their regular food intake and their diet.

Well we have everything in our house is nutritious. We have all like good breads and we are watching calories. Everything is like low fat and stuff. They try their best. We don't have chips and stuff like that in the house. (Rose)

Samantha attributes her parents' healthy eating habits to health concerns in her family.

She discussed that her parents' new regime of healthy eating is due to a diagnosis of high blood pressure; nonetheless, this still has a positive impact on her daily intake.

Ahh...my parents used to eat a lot of salt, and stuff like that because they didn't really know the difference. But lately, in the past 4 years since I joined cadets and

stuff, they...ahh...we've thrown out our deep fryer a few months ago which I don't like, but...they don't have salt anymore, and ...my mom tries to cut down. And they don't have salt fish, they only eat fresh fish. My mom has cut down a lot, and I think it's because of high blood pressure, so they are trying to stay away from it. (Samantha)

Although the participants stated that their parents generally have good eating habits, all participants indicated that either their father or mother tended to have better eating habits than the other. In most cases, it was the mother who paid closer attention to healthy eating, while the father leaned more towards unhealthy food.

Umm...my mom eats healthy. Like she'll...yeah she eats pretty good. And dad...well...dad eats...good but the he likes his junk food too. (Tanya)

Mom has really good eating habits. She eats a lot of healthy foods, and she walks a lot all the time. But dad on the other hand eats a lot of junk food and stuff... like dads would [laughs]. (Amy)

It appeared to the researcher that there was concern on Molly's account when discussing her father's eating habits.

Umm...his aren't so good. He usually doesn't eat breakfast, and sometimes don't eat lunch. When they are on no junk food diets, he eats it anyways. I don't know... he always eats chips and junk and stuff. (Molly)

Liz also expressed concern; however, it was due to the fact that her dad was following a strict diet and was limiting his intake.

Its like don't eat during the week and then Friday night he'll eat steak. We usually have take out on Friday nights. The rest of the week he eats like...well he doesn't have a lot for dinner. He'll take like a tangerine and a banana for his dinner. But he'll eat supper and everything, he doesn't not eat, he just doesn't eat as much as he used to before Christmas or whatever. (Liz)

Based on information provided by participants, it appears that the majority of fathers had less than perfect eating habits, Monica suggested that her father had a positive impact on her eating habits based on a very healthy eating pattern at home.

(1) Well...like I said before, my dad has always been very aware of proportions and meals and he always knows what he's eating.

(2) At breakfast time, he eats eggs...but he doesn't eat the yolk so I started doing that. Now I won't even eat the yolk of an egg. I eat everything on whole wheat and yeah, I just look at his eating habits. (Monica)

Although all participants still live at home and their parents cook their meals for them, it was apparent that eating habits had been acquired when the girls ate meals outside of the home.

Definitely. Whenever I am at a restaurant and I order a wrap, or like a sandwich, I'm used to dad always saying "can I have that on whole wheat?", so I will always ask for whole wheat. (Monica)

I would say yeah, because you're so immune to the food that you always eat at home so that when you go to a restaurant that you just order what you're used to. (Tanya)

Parents' everyday consumption of food is an influence on these young girls; however, what could be more influential is whether or not the girls' parents follow a diet for the purpose of losing weight. Although the parents may not perceive it, this is having an impact on their daughters. It appears that more fathers diet in this study than do mothers.

He just went on a diet actually and lost like...30 lbs... (Liz)

Well before he used to have like 2 plates, maybe 3 plates, he used to love his food. But then they starting dieting and stuff, he'll want another plate but he won't get it. Sometimes now he doesn't even go back for seconds. Sometimes at night he'll have a coffee and a muffin but its so much better than before. Now its 3 meals and 2 snacks and that's it. But yeah... he's changed a lot. (Rose)

Well they [parents] both want to lose weight, so stuff like that. (Molly)

Finally, the participants were asked directly if their father's eating habits had an impact on the way they ate. Half of the adolescents interviewed suggested that to a certain extent it did, while others expressed their strict following of their fathers' consumption pattern.

I'd say yeah. Because I enjoy my junk food. I eat more chocolate and stuff than I should but I think that comes from seeing my dad eat whatever he wants. And he is always the one who brings it. (Tanya)

I follow him to some extent. But, if like, there is something that I want to have seconds of, I'm going to have it. (Rose)

Umm...kind of because where he like always cooks certain things and stuff. But, if I asked him to go out and buy something, he will. (Jessica)

Ummm...in a way. I mean I like to eat, but I would never eat as much as him. So in a little bit he does yeah. (Amy)

Only Molly expressed that her father has no impact on her eating habits.

Not really no. Well I do eat a lot of junk food, but he eats like it every day but I only do it on weekends. I don't want to have his habits of eating it every day like him. (Molly)

5.6.3 Media Influence

The media today is constantly focusing the spotlight on the daily lives and appearances of actresses, singers, and models. This constant attention means that looks, weight and body image become very important to these individuals. Unfortunately, young girls see this image being portrayed by their favorite celebrity and they believe that this is the look that is acceptable in today's society. The girls in this study were no exception to this media influence. All participants expressed that they, or teenage girls in general, can feel an influence from those in the media.

Models now are like super skinny compared to back in the 60's and 70's...and....girls now think that guys won't like them unless they are really skinny. (Samantha)

Like...we constantly say like the weight of the stars... like it matters a lot. (Amy)

Monica believes that all of these celebrities in the spotlight are happy, and she attributes their happiness to their slenderness and looks.

I can't not say the media, I definitely am influenced by the media...when you see the stars and stuff. They are all skinny and attractive...and they look like they are happy. (Monica)

Not only are these young females influenced by the media, they suggest that they often feel pressure to look a certain way because these celebrities are a representation of what is accepted in today's society.

Its like...actors and singers and stuff...you see their bodies and they all have the perfect bodies and just seeing that...I don't know...makes you want to have a body like that. (Tanya)

For me? Not really. Most girls do though. A new magazine will come out and then in the next 2 or 3 weeks everyone has that outfit. And if they say tall and skinny is in then everyone wants to be tall and skinny, but if the magazine says curves are in then not as many people diet that year. So a lot of people feel pressure like that. (Molly)

Jessica feels that seeing the celebrities on television makes her feel like she is overweight.

No, but just like watching TV and stuff like that and seeing all the skinny people on TV makes you want to lose weight. (Jessica)

While the participants discussed the influence from the media that they felt, some participants still felt that these celebrities were not an ideal role model. Liz and Molly

both indicated that, although many adolescents are influenced by and feel pressure from the media, a lot of society's elite were not healthy.

Well you look in magazines and see pictures of stars and see how skinny they are, I just think its gross. There is a healthy weight, and there is a not healthy weight. Some people think that not healthy weights are just overweight but there are not healthy weights that are underweight too. And I think a lot of people don't see that...people don't see that there is too skinny also. (Liz)

Sometimes we talk about models because we're into fashion. They are pretty gross. Well they don't eat anything. Mostly they are anorexic and they just don't look healthy. (Molly)

With all of the pressures that an adolescent is faced with today with regards to body image and dieting, it is imperative that they have someone to turn to with concern and questions. Ella said that she is comfortable talking to her parents about these issues.

Yeah we talk about there are a lot of pressures on young people today with like the super models and other people on TV. And like... how it's all a bit much. They think there is a lot of pressure on young girls. And we talk about how not everyone is the same, and people need to realize that and stuff... (Ella)

5.6.4 Other Influences

Even though the three main influences and pressures on adolescents have been discussed, often there are other influences that are present. The participants in this study listed three other factors that they felt influenced the way they thought and felt about their body image and their diet. Three of the participants felt it was important to stay in shape and maintain a good body weight to be competitive in their sport of choice.

I wanted to stay in shape so I could run. So I could be the best I could be at the competition. (Samantha)

...when I play volleyball in the summer I look at the other girls from the other towns and I will feel pressure to be as fit as them so I can get a place playing on the team with them. (Monica)

Playing sports really. I know I have to be in shape to do this, so otherwise I know it isn't going to happen. I have to be healthier. (Tanya)

Two participants, Liz and Ella, consider themselves to be their main influence on a positive body image development.

I dunno, just myself really. I just kinda put...I dunno...I really don't know...it's weird...um...I just put myself like...I know that I'm not the skinniest person but I don't think I'm overweight, I kinda think I'm just there. (Liz)

Umm... I don't know. I kind of just exercise and stuff for myself... (Ella)

As Erin is completing her final year of high school, she states that her main influence for losing weight and body image development is fitting into her graduation gown.

(1) Umm...my last year of high school (now). You know, you want to look good and you want to fit in that grad dress. I haven't overly cared much about it before...

(2) The grad dress now is the trigger to care. (Erin)

5.7 Communications

From reading the transcripts, it was found that one of the biggest influences on the participants' perception of their body image was communication. The participants discussed different forms of communication that they viewed as helping to shape their opinions on their own body image as well as their diet. Communication in the form of comments, teasing, discussions and health information were found to be relevant contributors to these adolescents' opinions of themselves.

5.7.1 Discussions about Body Image and Diet

These females feel comfortable enough with their body to discuss it with people who are close to them. These discussions are often encouraging in the development of a positive body image. Half of the participants indicated that they were comfortable talking with their friends about issues surrounding body image and diet. Monica suggested that since most of her friends were athletic, they often discussed ways to diet and stay in shape for sports.

Well...some of us are athletic so we work out and talk about getting in shape for that and yeah, we talk about dieting and what foods are good and what foods are not good and what we should be eating and stuff like that. (Monica)

Tanya and Rose both feel that they talk with their friends on a regular basis about body image and diet. They both feel that they can discuss “girl issues” with their friends and compare themselves with others which may change how they look at themselves.

Ahh...just like if we've gained weight or if we lose weight. I don't know...just like girl stuff I guess....hips [laughs] and butt [laughs]... (Tanya)

All the time. We're always like at the YMCA and stuff, and saying like who looks like what this week and that kind of stuff. (Rose)

Only two of the participants felt that they had genuine conversations with their mothers about body image and diet.

Umm...my mom sometimes. Like sometimes I'll ask her stuff. Once I asked her what the average weight I'm supposed to be and all that stuff. And where I do sports...I want to know what I should weigh. (Amy)

Yeah. We mainly talk about eating right, she's a diabetic nurse. But we never really talk about how I feel about my body. It's just mainly about eating right and stuff. (Molly)

Only one participant mentioned that she spoke to her father on a regular basis if she had an issue regarding her body image or diet.

Probably my dad because he knows how much of what is good and how to work out and stuff. (Monica)

Although discussions with friends seemed to be the most common approach that the participants took, three participants suggested that they would speak to other people with any issues that they may have. Erin said that she would speak to her physician if she was interested in losing weight.

Well probably like a doctor if I was really trying to lose weight and wanted a diet, but that's about it. (Erin)

Rose initially said that she talks to her friends, but she also said that she talks to her boyfriend if she needs help in terms of working out and staying in shape.

Well...I think it would be more like me and my boyfriend talking about it. He's very committed and he's very into it so he knows more about it than I do. (Rose)

5.7.2 Health Information

Not only is it important that participants are able to have discussions regarding their issues with body image and diet, the source of their health information is also important. Given that nutrition education is not taught in the high school curriculum, these girls have to go elsewhere to find this information. Often, the places they retrieve it from are not always reliable sources. Rose says that she gets a lot of her dieting information from a reality television show.

On TV. Like I watch a lot of TV shows...there's one called "weighted" I think. I was watching it like 2 months ago and there was a girl who was doing an 800

kcal diet, and he said no you can't do that, it has to be 1100 kcal or more...
(Rose)

In a clear, concise manner, Amy indicated that she could gather relevant and reliable information on the internet. When asked where she got all of her information on body image, healthy eating, and dieting, she simply stated

Internet for sure. (Amy)

Two participants suggested that they turn to their families for health information. Monica talks to her father, while Molly discusses the helpfulness of her mother.

I get it from my dad because he has a background in nutrition so he tells me whatever I want to know. (Monica)

Ah... my mom does. She's a nurse and sometimes I read her books or her pamphlets but nothing other than that. (Molly)

Finally, only one girl suggested that she would speak to a teacher in her school. Although Rose said that she turns to the television for information, she also said she speaks to her physical education teacher as well, as he is educated in the field of fitness and teaches a course which involves a nutrition component.

Umm...honestly I'd go to my phys ed teacher. Honestly he's the only one in the school that I know that I would talk to about anything. Actually, that's who I talk to about my diet and stuff now. He's the only one who would say like "don't do that" or that kind of thing. (Rose)

5.7.3 Comments made by Parents

The young females had many insights on comments from their parents, and how these affected them. Unfortunately, these parents may not be aware of how they are affecting their daughters. The participants discussed hearing their parents making comments

regarding their own weight and body shape, which often reflects their appearance and how they feel about themselves. In all instances, except for two, it was the participants' mother who had made comments regarding her own body shape and her desire to lose weight. Samantha says that she's heard her mother compare herself to when she was in high school, and she has heard her say she wants to lose weight and look like that again.

I've heard my mom say that she wants to get in shape, but not smaller, she just wants to be in shape, like more physically fit. And I've heard my mom say that she wishes that she had the body that she had in high school because she was so tiny. (Samantha)

Erin says that she hears her mother make comments about her weight on a regular basis; however, she says that she encourages her mom that she does not need to lose weight and that she is being hard on herself for no reason.

My mom lately has been trying really hard to lose weight. She's been going to the YMCA and she's been looking at old pictures and says "Oh I want to be skinny again." And she isn't that big. I always say to her "Come on mom, cut yourself some slack, it isn't that big of a deal." (Erin)

Rose expressed a similar concern as Erin in that she does not want to hear her mother making comments about her own weight.

Well mom is more like the girly girl and is always saying "oh I'm big" and "this shirt doesn't fit", and it like gets to her and it upsets her... Well when I hear my mom say stuff, I will tell her to stop because I don't want to hear it, I really don't...I just always tell mom to do something it and stop talking about it. (Rose)

Both Monica and Amy expressed that hearing their mother make comments regarding their own weight directly affects them.

...I do when she says stuff like “Oh I need to lose weight”, then I look at myself and think “well I’m the same size as you” but then I know its just her being her.[laughs] (Monica)

...Or my mom will go around and say like “oh I have to diet because I have a fat butt” and stuff like that....Not directly but sometimes mentally. Sometimes I think, well maybe I look like my mom and she wants to lose weight, so maybe I have to too. (Amy)

Only one participant mentioned hearing both of her parents stating that they want to lose weight.

Yeah. Well they both want to lose weight, so stuff like that. (Molly)

Not only do parents make comments about their own weight and body shape, but often parents make comments to their daughters about their weight and shape. In some cases these are direct comments, while in other instances they are indirect. Liz discusses comments that she has heard from both of her parents on different occasions regarding her gaining weight.

(1)well once my mom said “you’re a little pudgy” and then I told her that I didn’t like it when she said stuff like that, so she stopped. She knows that it bothered me so she said “Oh I’m sorry” but I know that she didn’t mean it and that she was just joking around.

(2)well, we’ll probably be out and he’ll just say like ‘you’re getting a bit pudgy there.’ But I don’t really take it...it doesn’t really bother me. I know I’m not...so I don’t let it bother me. Sometimes I’m like “dad don’t say that”, but he usually just plays it off. (Liz)

Jessica has heard both of her parents make comments about her body weight. She had heard comments directly from her mom telling her that she needs to be on a diet, while her dad commented on her current weight.

(1)My mom did recently. She just said that I need to go on a diet and I should stop eating McDonalds.

(2)He just said that I was getting chubby and stuff like that. (Jessica)

Amy has been subjected to her mother directly telling her that she needs to watch her weight.

Umm... no. well they might say something...Like if I was going to try out for something she might say "well if you're trying out for that then you should keep your weight down and stay in shape. Why don't you jog" or something like that. (Amy)

Only two of the participants had expressed ever hearing positive comments from their parents when asked "have you ever heard your parents make comments about your body weight or shape?" Tanya says that her mom often makes positive comments to her about her appearance.

No, mom will usually say like "oh you're beautiful" or more good things rather than bad things or whatever. (Tanya)

Ella says that she has heard positive comments, but from her father. She said even from the time she was younger and was not happy with her body weight, her father was encouraging and still continues to positively influence her via communication today.

(1)Well when I was younger and was upset about my weight, they would tell me different ways that I could feel better. And they told me I should be eating healthier, and they encouraged me to get a membership at the YMCA. But they actually never said anything about it, just how to change it.

(2)Umm...well no never negative at all. Sometimes he'll say that he's happy that we both lost weight together or something to make me feel good...and it does make me feel good and is motivating. I always feel like I've accomplished something. Because if he notices a difference, and he's with me every day, then other people must notice too. It's a good feeling. (Ella)

Participants indicated that they took their parents' comments as a joke. Indirect comments were found to be a common trend, especially coming from the participants'

fathers. The majority of times the participants had suggested that the comments came from their fathers was when “junk food” was present. Both Monica and Erin have heard these comments.

No. He hasn't teased me. Its just like if I'm eating a big donut he'll say "Oh, you know that'll go to your hips" but nothing... nothing...I don't take it to heart.
(Monica)

But he just jokes around about it. Like I'll pick up a chocolate bar to eat and dad will be like "oh, that's going straight to your hips" but he's just joking around.
(Erin)

Monica has heard her father make comments with regards to the amount of food she eats.

Um...not serious [laughs]...dad will probably say "you better watch what you're eating. It'll go to your hips." But he hasn't actually said that I need to lose weight or anything. He will say things like if you want to go out somewhere to eat you should probably work out harder and get into shape but nothing negative.
(Monica)

The only girl to say that she has heard indirect comments from her mother was Samantha; however, she did state that she heard these comments from both of her parents. She discusses how her parents have made comments with regards to her maintaining her weight and staying in shape.

Well my mom has said "You know, don't put on too much weight" and well my dad has said "You know you have to keep your shape, you don't want to become overweight." I think they realize that A LOT of girls are becoming overweight...
(Samantha)

5.7.4 Comments made by Peers

As has been discussed, adolescence is a time when peer influence is at its peak. Parental comments are influential, but peer comments and teasing can often be quite hurtful and often be a trigger for negative body image development. All of the participants had

expressed being influenced or tormented by comments made by their peers. The levels of teasing varied; however, the stigma attached to it was very equal. The majority of the teasing was about the participants' weight.

Umm...nothing in particular sticks out. But probably someone said something like you're fat or you're tall but nothing really horrible. (Erin)

Well... umm... a lot of people just said I was getting fat and stuff, but then I lost the weight and I didn't care anymore [laughs]. (Jessica)

(1)Ummm... not really. I mean some people might go by you and go "ha ha fat" but its not serious, but it can get pretty annoying. But it hasn't really gotten to me because I know I'm not big.

(2)Teased? Kind of. Yeah like... in the teasing sense I don't know...but they say stuff. Like I could be out and someone will say oh your legs are fat or something like that. Its just a comment and then they move on. (Amy)

Three of the adolescents stated that they have heard comments about other parts of their body, or just their body stature in general. Tanya said she is often teased about the size of her chest. She says these comments made her feel self-conscious.

Ahh...like laughing at my boobs or something...and saying like "oh your boobs are huge" and if we are doing the limbo or something they'll say like "Oh you're never going to fit under there" and that kinda thing. (Tanya)

Amy said that she has heard comments made about her height because she was always taller than her classmates. Comments like this often made her feel uncomfortable.

Not exactly but I was always taller than other people so they just always made comments about me being taller. (Amy)

Two girls in this study have suggested that they have been teased for being too thin, which they had indicated hurt their feelings.

Well, they are only joking. But still, usually you hear people say “oh you’re too fat” but when people say “Oh you’re too skinny” that isn’t a very nice thing to say either. It can still hurt people’s feelings. (Samantha)

People just say like “you’re so skinny, why can’t I be like that.” But that’s all... She’s a stick! [laughs]. (Molly)

In most cases, when asked how hearing these comments made them feel, the girls discussed feelings of hurt, sadness, and being uncomfortable. Samantha said that it did not make her feel good when she heard those remarks, but she thought it might be just a phase that her peers were going through.

Um....uncomfortable, and I got a bit upset sometimes but I realized that they would grow out of it and so would I. (Samantha)

Amy expressed concern about comments that she heard about her weight, or specific body parts, but she said it was not enough for her to take action to make a change.

Um... kind of makes me feel bad. It makes me wish that I was smaller or had smaller legs or whatever but again, I don’t do anything about it because I’m fine with the way I look. (Amy)

Opposite to that reaction stands Rose. She stated that hearing her peers comment on her body shape or weight, in negative fashion, is motivating.

I think it would motivate me more. I’d be like ok “they actually acknowledged me, and they know that I’m there.” So like I think it would motivate me more to diet and go to the YMCA and stuff. (Rose)

Tanya expressed her disgust and flattery when hearing comments about her body. She stated that who the teasing was coming from, would influence how she reacted to it.

Well it depends, sometimes I feel...I feel really uncomfortable when they say it but like...sometimes I’ll feel flattered and sometimes I’ll feel like “ewww get away!” [laughs]. (Tanya)

Molly stated concern that people were getting the wrong impression of her. She said that she is a tall and naturally thin female, and it bothers her when people make comments to her and they think that she is dieting to maintain her figure.

Well, if they think I'm dieting or that I don't eat... that kind of made me feel upset because I don't. I've just always been this way. (Molly)

6.0 Discussion

Body image and dieting are issues that every adolescent female faces. Often these issues are considered a main priority, as the way they look is very important to them. These young women cannot escape the power of influence that is attached to body image and diet as they are bombarded with it on a daily basis from their family, peers, as well as the media. Family relationships are very important during this age, and can be seen as having both a positive and negative influence on these young girls in relation to body image and diet. Many of the girls in this study expressed feelings that their parents, particularly their fathers, have a positive impact on them when it comes to their body image development and their dieting habits. The participants felt comfortable with themselves and this was reflected in that fact that they have a positive perception of self as well as a positive relationship with their father. They reported that they feel pressure from their peers and the media, but often they feel comfortable in talking with their parents about this, and may be deterred from conforming to the norm due to that level of openness with their parents.

The social ecological framework which guided this research helps to interpret the varying influences identified by these adolescents that impact their body image development and their dieting habits. Young girls identified aspects from three of the four spheres in the theoretical framework: the microsystem, the mesosystem and the macrosystem. This framework not only acknowledges the immediate factors that influence one's experience with body image and diet, but considers the environment in which she is living, which includes various external factors.

The social ecological framework has been very effective at giving meaning to the experiences of these adolescents in terms of their perception of body image, dieting practices, and their relationship with their father. All levels of the framework played a significant role in developing an understanding of important relationships that influence the experience of the adolescents and those who interact with the adolescents.

The microsystem and mesosystem were important in discovering the immediate influences on the development of a young girl's body image as well as her dieting practices. It is important to target these influences in terms of building a base of information to further educate and help these young girls with any issues they may have concerning the same. The macrosystem influences the young girls in this study.

Indirectly, it has a strong influence on their development of self-identity. It is also important to determine just how young girls view the media as an influence, which in turn will allow health care professionals to counter-target that same direction and allow them to provide these girls with sound nutrition advice and education.

In this study, the immediate family is representative of the microsystem of the Social Ecological Theory. Along with the immediate family is the pressure exerted by girls on themselves, which sits in the microsystem. The interrelationship between the microsystem and external influences is the mesosystem (50). One mesosystem in this study is the relationship between the adolescent and her peers. This relationship is often one of the most influential in a young girls' life and gives meaning to her experiences with body image and dieting habits (15). A second mesosystem identified was the

relationship between the participants and their involvement in sport. This relationship was also seen to have an influence on the perception of body image and diet. Finally, and perhaps the most influential in this study, is the macrosystem. The macrosystem, including cultural pressures, the value of food, and the availability of health information has both direct and indirect influences on these young girls, which helps to shape their thoughts and opinions on body image and diet, as well as their development of the same.

6.1 Microsystem

6.1.1 Family Relationships

An adolescent's family has been shown to be one of the main influences in her development of body image and dieting habits. Past research has found that some of these influences are: perceptions of family relations, modeling of mother's behaviors and attitudes and direct communications between family members (5). The results of the present study indicate that these influences, as well as others discussed by the adolescents, help to shape these girls' perceptions of their body image and dieting habits.

The present study supports the idea that family is a major influence on a female adolescent's perception and development of her body image and diet. Although it may be assumed that peers also exert a great deal of influence on a young girl due to the presence of peer pressure, the current study suggests that a parent's influence is equal to that of one's peers. The literature suggests that parental influence is different than that of peers (19). The adolescents discussed their relationships with both their parents and their experiences with both together and individually. Gender theory suggests that daughters

tend to form a closer relationship with their mothers due to the nature of their same sex (11). Only one girl interviewed expressed this same sex importance in her family relationships. On the contrary, this study found that more girls had a closer relationship with their fathers. Four of the girls interviewed felt that they had a closer relationship with their fathers, while three felt that they were equally as close to both of their parents. These girls expressed a commonality with their fathers, and a trustworthiness that they did not experience with their mothers. This data conflicts with what was expected in accordance to gender theory and the family dyad. Gender theory states that, typically, mothers and daughters share common interests, while fathers and daughters share a special emotional bond (11). The present study indicates that the latter is true; these daughters do feel as though they have a special emotional connection with their fathers as discussed below.

The strength of the girls' relationship with their fathers was evident from the descriptions of this relationship. All but two of the adolescents interviewed stated that they had a special bond with their fathers. Those girls who expressed a closeness with their fathers had very different reasons for feeling this closeness; but nonetheless, they felt that a strong, positive relationship existed. Many of the girls discussed their closeness with their fathers in terms of him being understanding and trustworthy, while others expressed their enjoyment when they spent time with their fathers in a more physical role. Only two of the girls suggested that their fathers were very encouraging in their lives. They mentioned that their fathers encouraged them to perform well in school, to make the right choices in their lives, and to prepare themselves for the future. Although in certain situations this

could be viewed as pressure, in the present study it appeared that participants viewed this as encouragement. It appeared that this paternal support was very important to these girls. Adolescents spoke about spending time with their fathers. Most of the time spent with their fathers included physical activities such as walking or going to the gym, while other girls enjoyed just sitting and watching television with them. Participants indicated that it was during this time spent with their fathers that they were able to talk with them about anything and everything including the day-to-day issues they may have with body image or diet.

It can be concluded that there are distinct features of the relationships that these girls have with their fathers. The literature states that daughters with a positive relationship will have positive self-esteem, body image, and dieting practices (30). This research has seen similar outcomes: most of the adolescents interviewed showed positive body image with minor episodes of body dissatisfaction, while at the same time participants indicated a positive relationship with their fathers. One can speculate there is a direct relationship between the development of a young girls' development of her body image and dieting practices.

From analysis of the data provided by these girls, it appears that a strong father-daughter relationship is one of trust. Although the literature states that the mother-daughter relationship usually exhibits more trust, that was not the case in the current study. The majority of girls felt that they could trust their father more than they could their mother. They felt he was more there for them, and that they could talk to him about any matter

without judgment and with his complete trust. It is this trustworthiness that is a distinct characteristic of the father-daughter relationships studied in this research. It is because of this trust that it appears that there is a different quality of relationship exhibited between these girls and their mothers, and that of their fathers. In only one case did a participant feel she could trust her mom to talk to her about anything.

The influence from parents, more specifically fathers, was also evident from the descriptions of their involvement in the day-to-day lives of these young girls. Parents have been found to influence their daughters' perception of body image and diet in various ways including modeling, their own weight concerns, and communication in varying forms (4,7,13). Mothers, more so than fathers, have been determined to be the model for the daughter when it comes to issues surrounding body image and diet (21) and this was evident based on discussion with the participants in this study. All but one of the adolescents suggested that they were influenced by their father's dieting habits; however, half of the girls indicated that their fathers had negative dieting habits that impacted their own eating habits. It appeared that most of the participants' mothers leaned towards healthy eating, which the girls tended to incorporate into their dieting practices, while the fathers were the ones to bring the junk food into the house and enjoy binges of unhealthy choices. From listening to what these young girls had to say, it seems as though seeing their fathers consume unhealthy choices made them want to not strive to consume the same food. In this manner, the father does have an indirect impact on his daughters' eating habits. On the other hand, in agreement with the literature, the girls tended to model their mothers' healthy eating habits.

In terms of dieting, however, it was seen that more fathers in the study attempted to diet to lose weight than mothers. The findings of the present study were inconsistent with the literature. Studies have shown that fathers tend to not be as concerned with their body weight and, therefore, do not model dieting to their daughters (21). In one case in this study, one of the participants' fathers went to extreme measures to lose weight, but she insists that this had no impact on her diet. The participant does state that she was concerned about him due to his very restrictive eating. Half of the adolescents interviewed have observed their fathers attempt to diet for the purpose of losing weight. Although the fathers may not see it, and it may not be direct, this dieting does have an effect on their daughters. It has been determined that parents who attempt to control their own weight communicate this perception as well as their beliefs and values pertaining to body image and dieting practices to their daughters (7). In other instances, the girls saw their mothers dieting. This has more of a direct impact on the adolescents' perception of themselves. Two participants directly said that seeing their mothers diet makes them question their own weight and shape as they are similar in size to their mothers. The literature suggests that this is a common trend. As both are females, mothers and daughters are faced with the same cultural pressures with regards to the "ideal body." Often, a daughter's experience with her own body is affected by how her mother feels about her own body (13,23).

Not only are parents' dieting habits an influence on their daughters, but the way a family communicates also has an impact on the daughter. This communication can have both

positive and negative effects on the daughter. Comments and teasing appear to have a significant impact on how a young girl sees herself. These comments made by parents can be directed at themselves about their own body weight and shape, or in many cases these comments are made to or about their daughters' weight or body shape. Parents may not realize how significant an impact these comments have on their daughters and in many cases they do not even think anything of it (4). In many cases, these comments, although some may see them as harmless, can be a trigger for a young girl to start dieting, which in turn may result in a more serious condition such as an eating disorder (7). Even though both parents have been known to make these comments, the literature suggests that mothers often make comments about their own weight, while fathers are often the parent responsible for making comments about their daughters' weight (4). The current research saw a similar pattern. All but two participants discussed having heard their mothers make comments about their own body or their wanting to lose weight. These comments seem to have both a physical and psychological effect on these young girls. Two of the girls stated that this had directly made them reconsider their own body weight, as they were very close to their mothers' body shape and weight. Two of the participants were able to discuss this issue with their mothers and had requested that they not make those comments in front of them. Consistent with the literature, none of the girls interviewed had heard their fathers make comments about their own weight. However, all with the exception of one girl had heard indirect comments or teasing from their fathers. All girls agreed that these comments usually came from their father during meal time or when they were snacking. Girls often heard things like "that's going straight to your hips" or "are you really going to eat all of that." All nine girls believed that her

father only said these things jokingly; however, according to the literature, it is these comments that parents often do not realize hurt their daughters and indirectly may be forcing them to reconsider their self-image and attempt weight loss.

The way a father speaks to his daughter appears to be a reoccurring theme in this research. It appears as though a father feels more comfortable in making jokes with regards to his daughter's body image and diet as opposed to really sitting with her and talking about the issues. Perhaps it can be concluded that father's use this form of communication (.i.e teasing), as a coping mechanism due to the fact that they do not know how to deal with their daughter's development in her adolescent life. Joking and teasing is now socially accepted, and many people find it easier to communicate this way, and perhaps this is the situation the fathers are finding themselves in. However, these fathers need to realize, and be made aware of, the indirect influence these comments are having on their young daughter's perception of their self as well as their dieting habits. Fathers need to be sensitive to the delicate nature of the issue of body image and diet and they need to be properly educated on how to communicate with their daughters on these issues.

The present study attempted to assess the overall impact that a father has on his daughter, not only in terms of her perception of her body image and diet, but the quality of the relationship between the two. According to the research, it has been found that fathers appear to have a much smaller impact on their daughters when compared to mothers (27). On the contrary, all but one adolescent interviewed indicated that their fathers had

substantial impact on their lives. Participants spoke of the constant positive support from their fathers, as well as the sacrifices that their fathers have made and how they have come far in their lives. Many of the girls suggest that they strive to be like their fathers and that their fathers are an inspiration to them. The outcomes of this study suggest that if these girls see that their fathers have a positive impact on their lives, and these girls have a fairly positive body image (with only one girl attempting a restrictive diet), then it can be tentatively concluded that there is a link between the relationship between a father and his daughter and her perception of her body image and diet. Although this was a small study, the participant indicated a positive relationship with their fathers as well as a positive sense of self. One can only speculate on the relationship of positive father-daughter relationship and a positive sense of self.

The experiences of these adolescents in terms of body image and diet make it evident that the parents, and more specifically the father, have an effect on how the daughter perceives her own body image, its development and her dieting habits. The parent-child relationship, specifically the father-daughter relationship, the influence of eating habits, as well as communication within the family are all influential on the daughters' body image and diet.

6.2 Mesosystem

Factors external to the family were also shown to have an impact on the development and perception of body image as well as dieting practices.

6.2.1 Peers

The adolescents identified a significant mesosystem, the relationship between themselves and their peers. This relationship has an impact on the adolescents' development and perception of body image, and dieting habits. During adolescence, young girls are influenced by peer pressure. Girls often conform to the norm, and will go to any length to better fit in socially. Outside of the family, peers are the closest relationship these girls have, and therefore, they have a strong impact on their every day experiences.

With the constant pressure from society to have the 'ideal body,' it is reassuring to know that young girls have someone to turn to: their peers. Unfortunately, this relationship is not always one with a positive impact. An adolescent's peer group is the key medium in the development of body dissatisfaction (15). Based on the results of this study, it was evident that peers have both a negative and positive impact on these girls. The majority of these girls said that they felt pressure from their peers to look a certain way. All girls agreed that entering a new school was a reason to pay extra attention to the way they look. Two of the adolescents were convinced that, if they were skinny when they started high school, they would make a good impression and acquire a new peer group. Another participant discussed her desire to make a lasting impression on the older students in the school so she would fit in. It is during this period of their lives that interpersonal relationships become very important, with an adolescent's peer group being one of the key relationships in their lives. Many adolescents develop their self-image, including body image, via these relationships (16). One adolescent felt that her social life was the most important thing in her life. She indicated that it was important to look a certain way

to keep up with her peer group and not be singled out if her hair was different or if she dressed differently. It could be speculated that this girl would go to any length and conform to the norm expected of her to fit in with her friends and blend in. This indicates how detrimental it is that the concept of the ideal body is one of such a slim build and often the norm in society today is a restrictive diet leading to a boy like figure. This adolescent, in particular, had said that it is important to “look good for your friends.” It is evident from the results of this research that these young girls associate having friends with looking a certain way, and, having a certain body size and shape is a component of this. It is unknown to what extremes adolescent females will go to achieve this desired look. Although the literature indicates that perceived body image is distorted, females are willing to adopt rather drastic measures to attain or maintain their desired weight. This is evident in one participant in this study who has gone to extreme measures to lose weight and meet this ideal put forth by society. Only one of the adolescents interviewed felt that being an individual and dressing the way she wanted, made her feel good about herself. She said that being herself gave her confidence and that this allowed her to have a close knit group of friends. This is perhaps reflective of the influence of peers and media. Based on the finding that one in ten girls felt that being an individual gave her the confidence to keep a close group of friends, it can be speculated that the majority of high school girls in this study are influenced by their peers and other factors.

Similar to their experience with parents, adolescents identified that their friends are often responsible for teasing. The literature states that peers are most often found to be the teasers when it comes to body weight and shape (17). Although this study found that both

fathers and peers were equally as guilty of teasing, it appears that peers are more direct in their teasing and will say what is on their mind, while parents had a more indirect way of speaking to their daughters about body image and diet. All ten adolescents interviewed said that they had been teased by their peers at one point or another during their adolescence. Many of the girls agreed that the majority of teasing was about their weight and they also agreed that these comments were direct. Studies show that girls who diet show higher levels of perceived peer influence than do non-dieters (19). It is evident that these comments regarding one's weight have a negative influence on the adolescent. Often, such comments will drive them to diet so they can avoid hearing those comments in the future. Although many of the girls try to shake these comments off, they all agreed that when hearing these things they were left feeling hurt, uncomfortable and questioning their body and their weight. From the results of this study, it can be speculated that due to stronger familial relationships, these young girls are better able to handle comments made by peers and therefore maintain their positive image of self and not conform to extreme dieting practices to be more socially accepted.

An adolescent's peer group is one of the most important group of people in their lives. Unfortunately these peers often intensify the pressure placed on young females by culture to look a certain way (5,20,24). The results of this research are consistent with, and strengthen, this finding. The adolescents interviewed are highly impacted by what their peers think, and base their own opinions on those in their peer group. These girls were found to compare themselves to one another on a regular basis as well as discuss various aspects of body image and diet daily. In terms of the Social Ecological Framework, this

indicates an interaction between systems. The microsystem appears to have an impact on the other systems, and in terms of body image and dieting practices, this microsystem is a solid foundation which is key for positive development. These, along with the teasing, are strong influences on the development of one's body image and dieting practices.

6.3 Macrosystem

6.3.1 Cultural Pressures and Media Influence

Our culture places a great deal of value on physical appearance. Culture has created this idea of the "ideal body" that many adolescents feel they have to attain to be happy (3). As adolescence is a very influential time in one's life, it is the time when one develops their sense of self-identity, including body image. It is difficult to develop a positive body image and to be content with the way one looks with the constant pressure from society to maintain this stick-like figure.

Young girls are exposed to these pressures on a daily basis in the forms of media reports on models and actresses, television shows, magazines and even commercials. One can imagine that it is difficult to turn a blind eye to the concept of beauty that is espoused by society's elite. All adolescents interviewed expressed concern with the pressure that exists from the media to look a certain way. Many of the adolescents felt that all of the celebrities who have this picture perfect image appeared to be happy. It was evident from these discussions that young girls associate beauty with happiness. One of the girls was quick to say that the stars looked happy and seeing that made her want to look like them. Several of the girls spoke about teenage girls conforming to what society has depicted as

popular at the time. One girl, in particular, said she can see that when a new magazine appears in stores, her peers change the way they dress, what they eat, and the way they do their hair to mimic the celebrities in the newest issue. Although the majority of girls felt that they were affected by the media pressure, two of the participants agreed that the majority of celebrities were not ideal role models for young girls. These girls realized that these celebrities are often not healthy, have eating disorders, and spend millions of dollars to look the way they do. They realize it is an unrealistic goal to strive to have bodies like theirs, and to look them, but at the same time these girls understand how young girls feel the pressure of the media.

Studies have shown that a “fear of fat” exists due to the drive towards thinness made popular by celebrities and society’s elite (14). This was seen in the current research. Many of the girls discussed not wanting to be overweight. From their discussions, it was clear that their definition of overweight was not consistent with the dictionary definition. This is in indication that participants would judge individuals of a healthy weight as being overweight. When asked what overweight meant, one participant said that overweight to her meant being 170 pounds, while another participant thought of overweight as being even lower than that. These girls seem to be fitting into what the literature has stated about a relatively low ideal body weight. This ‘ideal body’ has been around for decades, but with each passing year the perceived ideal weight gets lower and lower (14). Based on the findings of the present study, it is evident that participants’ knowledge of being overweight is limited, and they associate being overweight with a much lower body weight than medically indicates that someone is overweight.

With so much pressure on teenage girls today, it is important that girls can obtain health information that is reliable to help them with any issues they may have. The literature states that parents are a major source of health and nutrition information (3); however, that was not the case in this study. In this study, girls used other sources to acquire reliable nutrition information such as magazines, reality television, and the internet. With all of the pressure of attaining the 'ideal body,' it is important to consider the information that these media sources are providing to this population of adolescent girls. It is vital that these girls receive reliable nutrition advice and education. Only two out of ten girls interviewed said they would speak to their parents: one's father has a background in nutrition and fitness and the other's mom is a nurse. One girl said she speaks to her physical education teacher on a regular basis, but she also admitted to getting her diet information from a reality television show. A solid foundation of nutrition education is necessary for these girls to know the correct way to maintain a healthy body weight which in turn may allow them a more positive perception of their own body.

7.0 Final Thoughts

7.1 *Summary Statements*

This research has identified various important points from the three systems of the social ecological framework that can be used in counseling and educating adolescents in terms of body image, weight management and nutrition education. Below are a list of statements that summarize the findings:

- **Body image and diet practices:** The majority of girls studied stated no major body image issues. All girls stated that they have their days when they do not feel great about themselves, but for the most part, they are happy with themselves. Restrictive and severe dieting was not an issue, with most girls admitting to merely healthy eating to maintain their weight.
- **Parental Influence:** It appears that parental influence was the strongest influence on adolescent girls' perception and development of their body image as well as their dieting habits. Mothers were seen to be more of a model, while fathers were seen to encourage their daughters to stay active. Daughters felt comfortable talking to their parents with any issues they had with regards to body image and diet. As a result, it is important that we educate parents in areas of healthy eating and basic nutrition education as their daughters may turn to them for advice.
- **Father-Daughter Relationship:** It appears that there are distinct features in the father-daughter relationship. Adolescents say that they trust their fathers and feel more comfortable talking to them than some of their mothers. With none of the girls studied having severe body image issues, and stating a positive relationship with their father, it can be speculated that a father may in fact have an impact on his daughter's development and perception of her body image. In terms of dieting, fathers are not models, but their comments may actually be indirectly forcing their daughters to try to lose weight. Fathers need to be very aware of the impact that they have on their daughters. Therefore, educating the fathers on their influence as well as how to interact with an adolescent daughter in terms of body image and dieting is essential.
- **Peer Influence:** As a girl's peer group is one of the most interpersonal relationships known, it was found to have a significant impact on body image and diet. Girls were found comparing themselves to their friends, and discussions were common when it came to body image and diet. Peers were found to intensify the cultural pressure on young girls today; however, the extent of this influence may have been modified by positive father-daughter relationships.

- **Media Pressure:** The adolescent experiences strong media pressure in terms of looking a certain way and achieving the ‘ideal body’. It is important that these girls are aware of the media influence and are educated about the importance of body image and body weight. Again, such influences may be modified based on the nature of the relationships within the family.
- **Health Information:** With so much pressure on these young girls and dieting being the norm, access to reliable health information is very important. It is necessary to educate these young girls and their parents with regards to body image issues.

7.2 *Limitations and Biases*

This study is not without its limitations, despite its strong methodology. The major limitation of this study was that subject selection took place in only one rural town in Central Newfoundland. This region represents only a small portion of the population of the province. Only one high school stands in the community and, therefore, all participants knew each other and this was related to the small population. Confidentiality was maintained on the part of the researcher but the participants were eager to discuss their participation in the study with their school mates.

Another limitation is selection bias. The researcher used recruitment through personal contact as the process of subject selection and it can be assumed that adolescents who volunteered to participate in this study may have had a positive relationship with their father and minimal body image issues. In having to obtain parental permission prior to participation in this study, other students may have limited themselves from being included as they may not have wanted their parents to be aware of any issues they may have or did not want them to ask questions. Similar to the selection bias is the fact that the girls who participated were aware of the focus of the interview prior to the commencement of it. In this situation there may have been inaccuracies in responses due

to the fact that participants may be answering the questions in a way they believe that the researcher wanted them to answer, rather than telling their experience the way it truly was.

The relative inexperience of the researcher may be seen as another limitation of the current research, as this was the first qualitative research conducted by the researcher. Attempts to minimize this limitation were addressed by the researcher completing two mock interview sessions, along with a practice effect after each interview. These skills improved with the conducting of each interview. Following each interview, the interviewer took time to review and reflect on ways to improve for the next interview. On the other hand, this inexperience may be seen as beneficial as the participants may not be intimidated by a younger, inexperienced person and may share information more readily. Along with this relative inexperience was the idea of the interview being of a structured nature. The questions on the interview guide were fairly focused and may have influenced the participants answers

7.3 Implications for Practice

The results of this study have provided numerous insights regarding body image perception and dieting practices of adolescent girls. This study identifies that a holistic approach to diet habits and eating practices has to be taken into consideration when counseling teenage girls with regards to weight, whether it be weight management or eating disorders. Basically, the findings of this research indicate that many psychological factors play a part in the development of one's body image, as well as their adopted

eating habits. This reinforces the dietitian's role in the 'team approach' to dealing with weight management and eating disorders.

One major implication is the need for better nutrition education, not only for the adolescent but also for the families. It had been seen that these girls are using the word "anorexic" as an equivalent to skinny. This may be due to a lack of education in the school system. The results of this study support the need for nutrition education in the school system. It is ideal to make nutrition education a required course in the junior high curriculum, as this is the age 13-15 years, when these girls are the most vulnerable and easily influenced and when body image becomes the most important to them. Not only is it important to educate those adolescents involved but it is essential that the parents be educated as well. As these young girls often turn to their parents for advice, it is vital that they are well educated and able to provide them with reliable and sound nutrition advice.

Findings from this study highlight the need for both parents to be involved in nutrition counseling. Both the mother and father are seen to have an impact on their daughters' decisions to diet, as well as their actions with regards to food; therefore, it is crucial that both be a part of the counseling. In the case of weight management, without the whole family being involved, it can be difficult for the young girl to start eating healthy.

Especially if the daughter is receiving mixed messages including her mother trying to eat healthy, while her father continues on a less desirable diet regime.

7.4 Future Research

Further research needs to be conducted to provide additional information regarding influences on an adolescent's perception of her body image, the development of her body image and her dieting habits, as well as the nature of the father-daughter relationship.

This research provided a starting point to further understanding the relationship between a daughter and her father, and its effect on how she sees herself and her dieting habits.

Previous research has mainly looked at the mother-daughter relationship and its effect on the daughter in terms of body image and diet with very few studies looking closely at the father-daughter relationship.

Exploring the experiences of the father would provide a more complete understanding on his influence on his daughter's life, as well as his perspective on what the daughter has already discussed. As previously identified, a father does indeed have an impact on his daughter's perception of her body image and her dieting habits; therefore, it would be very interesting to hear his thoughts on whether or not he feels as though he has an impact or not. To further this research it would be interesting to not only interview the father-daughter pair separately but to interview them together, or perhaps in a focus group of all fathers, and then another with all daughters. As was seen in the present study, one participant had an absent father, and it appeared that she had a different opinion than the other nine girls. From this finding, it would be interesting to delve more deeply into the idea of absent fathers versus present fathers and its impact on the girls' perception of her body image and diet.

To delve more deeply into the parent's influence on the daughter's body image and diet, the parental triad could be considered: mother-father-daughter. As the mother-daughter relationship is well studied, it would be interesting to see the perspective of both parents in terms of how they feel they influence their daughter. Expanding on this current research will allow for a better understanding of the influences on one's development and perception of her body weight as well as dieting habits of adolescents. This further knowledge will assist dietitians, health care professionals, and educators in providing counseling and education to these girls.

7.5 Conclusion

The adolescents in this study described their experiences with body image and dieting in terms of the various influences that surround them. Parents appeared to heavily influence these girls in various ways including the quality of the relationship, their dieting habits and communication within the family. In contrast to what the literature had suggested, these girls felt a stronger bond with their fathers and all were in agreement that he had a strong impact on them in terms of their lives as well as their body image and dieting habits. Although it may not be a direct impact similar to that of the mother, a father's influence was observed. The knowledge gained from this study will make an important contribution to understanding the distinct nature of the father-daughter relationship and its effect on how the daughter develops and perceives her body and the development of her dieting practices.

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APPENDIX A

Exploits Valley High School
392 Grenfell Heights
Grand Falls-Windsor, NL
A2A 1T6

December 20th, 2006

Dear Mr. Dave Antle:

I am writing this letter to request permission to use the students at Exploits Valley High School as participants in my research for completion of my Masters of Applied Human Nutrition from Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax, NS under the supervision of Dr. Janette Taper.

My study, which is titled "A Father's Influence on his Daughter's Body Image and Dieting Habits," will use semi-structured personal interviews to evaluate the distinct features of the father-daughter relationship and to determine if this relationship is influential on the development of body image and dieting habits of the daughter. The recruitment process will involve my going into various classrooms and giving a short presentation about my study and its purpose followed by all female students in the class being given a recruitment letter, along with an information sheet to be given to their parents or guardian. If the student is interested, she is to contact me via telephone or email. Once I have 10-12 females who meet the pre-determined inclusion criteria, subject selection will cease. Each participant will be asked to participate in a one-on-one interview that will be tape-recorded. Once the interview process is complete, all interviews will be transcribed verbatim and the tapes will be destroyed immediately. Confidentiality will be maintained to the highest level at points in this study. At no point in time will the names of the participants be used and all information obtained (informed consent, transcriptions, surveys, etc) will be stored in a locked cabinet for five years after publication, and will then be destroyed. This study has been deemed of minimal risk but the Research and Ethics Board of Mount Saint Vincent University. Although it is of minimal risk, the topic being researched is a sensitive issue and if at any point during the interview the participant does not feel comfortable responding, she does not have to. The participant may withdrawal at any point in the study and participation is voluntary.

I would like to thank you in advance for your time with regards to this research study. Should you require any other information please do not hesitate to contact me via e-mail: [REDACTED] or by phone: [REDACTED]. If you are interested in having a copy of my research proposal or a copy of the final results or complete thesis, I would be happy to provide you with either upon its completion.

Yours truly,
Denika Andrews, BSc (Acadia '04), MScAHN candidate (MSVU)

APPENDIX B

District Headquarters
203 Elizabeth Dr.
Gander, NL
A1V 1H6

February 27, 2007

Dear Ms. Cindy Fleet:

I am writing this letter to request permission to use the students at Exploits Valley High School as participants in my research for completion of my Masters of Applied Human Nutrition from Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax, NS. I have been in contact with Mr. Dave Antle, and have received written permission from the school.

My study, which is titled "A Father's Influence on his Daughter's Body Image and Dieting Habits," will use semi-structured personal interviews to evaluate the distinct features of the father-daughter relationship and to determine if this relationship is influential on the development of body image and dieting habits of the daughter. The recruitment process will involve my going into various classrooms and giving a short presentation about my study and its purpose, followed by all female students in the class receiving a recruitment letter, along with an information sheet to be given to their parents or guardian. If the student is interested, she is to contact me via telephone or email. Once I have 10-12 females who meet the pre-determined inclusion criteria, subject selection will cease. Each participant will be asked to partake in a one-on-one interview that will be tape-recorded. Once the interview process is complete, all interviews will be transcribed verbatim and the tapes will be destroyed immediately. Confidentiality will be maintained to the highest level at points in this study. At no point in time will the names of the participants be used, and all information obtained (informed consent, transcriptions, surveys, etc) will be stored in a locked cabinet for five years after publication, and will then be destroyed. This study has been deemed of minimal risk by the Research and Ethics Board of Mount Saint Vincent University. Although it is of minimal risk, the topic being researched is a sensitive issue and if at any point during the interview the participant does not feel comfortable responding, she does not have to. The participant may withdrawal at any point in the study and participation is voluntary.

I would like to thank you in advance for your time with regards to this research study. Should you require any other information please do not hesitate to contact me via e-mail: [REDACTED] or by phone: [REDACTED]. If you are interested in having a copy of my research proposal, or a copy of the final results or complete thesis, I would be happy to provide you with either upon its completion.

Yours truly,
Denika Andrews, BSc (Acadia '04), MScAHN candidate (MSVU)

APPENDIX C

Date: _____

Dear prospective participants:

I am graduate student in the Department of Applied Human Nutrition at Mount Saint Vincent University. As part of my Masters of Applied Human Nutrition program, I am conducting research under the supervision of Dr. Janette Taper. I am inviting you to participate in my study, A Father's Influence on his Daughter's Body Image and Dieting Habits. The purpose of the study is to examine the distinct features of the father-daughter relationship and to determine if this relationship is influential in the development of body image and dieting habits of the daughter

As you currently meet the criteria of being an adolescent female aged 15-18 years, you have been identified as eligible participants for this study. The study will involve a one-on-one personal interview which will be kept private and confidential. This interview will be completed either at your home, or at in the guidance office at Exploits Valley High School, whichever is more comfortable for you. The process will last approximately 1 hour which will include an introduction and the interview. You will be asked to meet with the researcher briefly once the interview is completed and transcribed to ensure that it is an accurate representation of what your experiences.

All information obtained (informed consent, transcriptions, etc.) will be stored in a manner that no persons other than the researcher will have access to the names of study participants. Your name will not be attached to any information used from the interviews or in the written material that will be submitted. Pseudonyms will be used for identification purposes of participants. Recorded tapes will be destroyed immediately following the transcription process. All information will be stored in a secure, locked cabinet in advisor's office for five years after publication and will then be destroyed; only the researcher and Dr. Janette Taper, thesis supervisor, will have access to this data. Electronic files will be password protected. No individual participants will be identified without their permission.

If you are interested in knowing more about this study or if you are interested in participating, please contact me at [REDACTED], [REDACTED] or at [REDACTED].

Thank you in advance for considering this study.

Yours truly,

Denika Andrews

APPENDIX D

Date: _____

Dear parents/guardians of prospective participants:

I am graduate student in the Department of Applied Human Nutrition at Mount Saint Vincent University. As part of my Masters of Applied Human Nutrition program, I am conducting research under the supervision of Dr. Janette Taper. I am inviting your daughter to participate in my study, A Father's Influence on his Daughter's Body Image and Dieting Habits. The purpose of the study is to examine the distinct features of the father-daughter relationship and to determine if this relationship is influential in the development of body image and dieting habits of the daughter

As your daughter currently meet the criteria of being an adolescent female aged 15-18 years, she has been identified as an eligible participant for this study. The study will involve a one-on-one personal interview which will be kept private and confidential. This interview will be completed either at your home, or in the guidance office at Exploits Valley High School, whichever is more comfortable for your daughter. The process will last approximately 1 hour which will include an introduction and the interview. Your daughter will be asked to meet with the researcher briefly once the interview is completed and transcribed to ensure that it is an accurate representation of her experiences.

All information obtained (informed consent, transcriptions, etc.) will be stored in a manner that no persons other than the researcher will have access to the names of study participants. Your daughter's name will not be attached to any information used from the interviews or in the written material that will be submitted. Pseudonyms will be used for identification purposes of participants. Recorded tapes will be destroyed immediately following the transcription process. All information will be stored in a secure, locked cabinet in advisor's office for five years after publication and will then be destroyed; only the researcher and Dr. Janette Taper, thesis supervisor, will have access to this data. Electronic files will be password protected. No individual participants will be identified without their permission.

If you are interested in knowing more about this study please contact me at [REDACTED]
[REDACTED], [REDACTED] or at [REDACTED].

Yours truly,

Denika Andrews

APPENDIX E

Information Sheet

Study Title:

A Father's Influence on his Daughter's Body Image and Dieting Habits

Principal Investigator:

Denika Andrews, BSc (Acadia University, '04), MScAHN (candidate)
Graduate Student, Applied Human Nutrition
Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, NS

Supervisors:

Janette Taper, Ph.D., Professor of Applied Human Nutrition, MSVU
(902) 457-6256; janette.taper@msvu.ca
Desmond Coombs, Psychologist, Central Regional Integrated Health Authority
(709)292-2246; dcoombs@cwhc.nl.ca
Daphne Lordly, MSc, Professor of Applied Human Nutrition, MSVU
(902)457-6256; daphne.lordly@msvu.ca

Introduction:

You have been invited to take part in a research project being conducted as a Masters of Science in Applied Human Nutrition thesis from Mount Saint Vincent University. Your participation in this study is voluntary and it is important that you understand the purpose, what you will be asked to do, how it may affect you and any risks or benefits of the study to you. The study is outlined below. If you should have any questions or concerns prior to or during the study please contact the researcher or a member of the supervisory committee at any time. If you have questions about how this study is being conducted, you may contact the Chair of the University Research Ethics Board of Mount Saint Vincent University, who is not directly involved in the study at 902-457-6350 or via e-mail at research@msvu.ca.

Purpose of the Study:

To evaluate the distinct features of the father-daughter relationship and to determine if this relationship is influential in the development of body image and dieting habits of the daughter.

Study Design:

This study will uncover the distinct nature of the father-daughter relationship and its effect on the daughter's development of body image and dieting practices. Adolescent girls will be recruited to participate in interviews regarding the topic. Once 10-12 adolescent females have agreed to participate, the recruitment process will cease.

What Participation Involves:

Should you chose to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in an interview with the researcher. This interview will take place in either your home or at Exploits Valley High School, whichever is most comfortable for you. The interview will last approximately 45-60 minutes.

The interview will be tape-recorded, and the researcher will take in-depth notes during the discussion. If at any time during the discussion you feel uncomfortable, you may request that the tape-recorder be turned off. Your name will not be associated with any quotes used from the interview which are reproduced in the researcher's thesis. Only the researcher will be aware of the identity of the members of the study group. Once the interview has been completed, the recorded discussion will be transcribed. Once these transcriptions are completed, you will be asked to review them to ensure accurate transcriptions of your input. At this time you can make any additions or offer further explanation to your discussion.

Potential Harms:

Due to the nature of an interview study, there is minimal risk associated with participating. However, some issues that we discuss may be sensitive and you may feel reluctant to contribute your thoughts. It is important to keep in mind that you do not have to respond or add to the discussion should you not feel comfortable with the discussion at any time, and you may leave at any point. Should you feel any discomfort with anything discussed during the interview, a counselor will be available to further discuss these discomforts.

Potential Benefits:

You may not receive any immediate benefits from this study. However, information generated in this study may give a better understanding or may be used for further studies on similar topics.

Withdrawal from Participation:

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose to withdraw from the study at any time, before, after or during the interview. Should you choose to withdraw from this study, your tape-recorded discussions will not be used in the study and will be destroyed.

Confidentiality:

All information obtained (informed consent, transcriptions, etc.) will be stored in a manner that no persons other than the researcher will have access to the names of study participants. Your name will not be attached to any information used from the interviews or in the written material that will be submitted. Pseudonyms will be used for identification purposes of participants. Recorded tapes will be destroyed immediately following the transcription process. All information will be stored in a secure, locked cabinet in advisor's office for five years after publication and will then be destroyed, only the researcher and Dr. Janette Taper, thesis supervisor, will have access to this data. Electronic files will be password protected.

Communication of Results:

A summary of the results and the conclusions of this project will be made available to you at the conclusion of this study should you request the same. Results can be mailed to your home or can be picked up at Exploits Valley High School.

Questions/Concerns:

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your involvement in this study, please contact the researcher Denika Andrews at [REDACTED], [REDACTED] or [REDACTED].

APPENDIX F

Information and Authorization Form

Study Title:

A Father's Influence on his Daughter's Body Image and Dieting Habits

Principal Investigator:

Denika Andrews, BSc (Acadia University, '04), MScAHN (candidate)
Graduate Student, Applied Human Nutrition
Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, NS

Supervisors:

Janette Taper, Ph.D., Professor of Applied Human Nutrition, MSVU
(902) 457-6256; janette.taper@msvu.ca
Desmond Coombs, Psychologist, Central Regional Integrated Health Authority
(709)292-2246; dcoombs@cwhc.nl.ca
Daphne Lordly, MSc, Professor of Applied Human Nutrition, MSVU
(902)457-6256; daphne.lordly@msvu.ca

Introduction:

Your daughter has been invited to take part in a research project being conducted as a Masters of Science in Applied Human Nutrition thesis from Mount Saint Vincent University. Your daughter's participation in this study is voluntary and it is important that you understand the purpose, what she will be asked to do, how it may affect her and any risks or benefits of the study to her. The study is outlined below. If you should have any questions or concerns prior to or during the study please contact the researcher or a member of the supervisory committee at any time. If you have questions about how this study is being conducted, you may contact the Chair of the University Research Ethics Board of Mount Saint Vincent University, who is not directly involved in the study at 902-457-6350 or via e-mail at research@msvu.ca.

Purpose of the Study:

To evaluate the distinct features of the father-daughter relationship and to determine if this relationship is influential in the development of body image and dieting habits of the daughter.

Study Design:

This study will uncover the distinct nature of the father-daughter relationship and its effect on the daughter's development of body image and dieting practices. Adolescent girls will be recruited to participate in interviews regarding the topic. Once 10-12 adolescent females have agreed to participate, the recruitment process will cease.

What Participation Involves:

Should your daughter chose to participate in this study, she will be asked to participate in an interview with the researcher. This interview will take place in either your home or at Exploits Valley High School, whichever is most comfortable for her. The interview will last approximately 45-60 minutes.

The interview will be tape-recorded, and the researcher will take in-depth notes during the discussion. If at any time during the discussion your daughter feels uncomfortable, she may request that the tape-recorder be turned off. Her name will not be associated with any quotes used from the interview which are reproduced in the researcher's thesis. Only the researcher will be aware of the identity of the members of the study group. Once the interview has been completed, the recorded discussion will be transcribed. Once these transcriptions are completed, your daughter will be asked to review them to ensure accurate transcriptions of her input. At this time she can make any additions or offer further explanation to the discussion.

Potential Harms:

Due to the nature of an interview study, there is minimal risk associated with participating. However, some issues that we discuss may be sensitive and your daughter may feel reluctant to contribute her thoughts. It is important to keep in mind that she does not have to respond or add to the discussion should she not feel comfortable with the discussion at any time, and may leave at any point. Should an issue arise for your daughter or yourself during or following the interview, a counselor will be available to further discuss these issues.

Potential Benefits:

Your daughter may not receive any immediate benefits from this study. However, information generated in this study may give a better understanding or may be used for further studies on similar topics.

Withdrawal from Participation:

Your daughter's participation in this study is voluntary. She may choose to withdraw from the study at any time, before, after or during the interview. Should she choose to withdraw from this study, her tape-recorded discussions will not be used in the study and will be destroyed.

Confidentiality:

All information obtained (informed consent, transcriptions, etc.) will be stored in a manner that no persons other than the researcher will have access to the names of study participants. Your daughter's name will not be attached to any information used from the interviews or in the written material that will be submitted. Pseudonyms will be used for identification purposes of participants. Recorded tapes will be destroyed immediately following the transcription process. All information will be stored in a secure, locked cabinet in advisor's office for five years after publication and will then be destroyed, only the researcher and Dr. Janette Taper, thesis supervisor, will have access to this data. Electronic files will be password protected.

Communication of Results:

A summary of the results and the conclusions of this project will be made available to your daughter at the conclusion of this study should she request the same. Results can be mailed to your home or can be picked up at Exploits Valley High School.

Questions/Concerns:

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your daughter's involvement in this study, please contact the researcher Denika Andrews at [REDACTED], [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

APPENDIX G

Free and Informed Consent Form

A Father's Influence on his Daughter's Body Image and Dieting Habits
Denika Andrews, MScAHN candidate
Supervisor: Dr. Janette Taper

I am graduate student in the Department of Applied Human Nutrition at Mount Saint Vincent University. As part of my Masters of Applied Human Nutrition program, I am conducting research under the supervision of Dr. Janette Taper. I am inviting you to participate in my study, A Father's Influence on his Daughter's Body Image and Dieting Habits. The purpose of the study is to examine the distinct features of the father-daughter relationship and to determine if this relationship is influential in the development of body image and dieting habits of the daughter

This study involves your participation in a one-on-one interview with the researcher. This interview will take place in either your home or at Exploits Valley High School, whichever is most comfortable for you. The interview will last approximately 45-60 minutes. The interview will be tape-recorded, and the researcher will take in-depth notes during the discussion. Upon completion of the research, these results will be made available to you should you be interested via a personal meeting or with a copy of the final thesis.

Due to the nature of an interview study, there is minimal risk associated with participating. However, some issues that we discuss may be sensitive and you may feel reluctant to contribute your thoughts. It is important to keep in mind that you do not have to respond or add to the discussion should you not feel comfortable with the discussion at any time, and you may leave at any point. Should you feel any discomfort with anything discussed during the interview, a counselor will be available to further discuss these discomforts. You may not receive any immediate benefits from this study. However, information generated in this study may give a better understanding or may be used for further studies on similar topics. Your participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty.

All information obtained (informed consent, transcriptions, etc.) will be stored in a manner that no persons other than the researcher will have access to the names of study participants. Your name will not be attached to any information used from the interviews or in the written material that will be submitted. Pseudonyms will be used for identification purposes of participants. Recorded tapes will be destroyed immediately following the transcription process. All information will be stored in a secure, locked cabinet in advisor's office for five years after publication and will then be destroyed; only the researcher and Dr. Janette Taper, thesis supervisor, will have access to this data. Electronic files will be password protected. No individual participants will be identified without their permission.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact the researcher Denika Andrews at [REDACTED], [REDACTED] or via e-mail at [REDACTED] or the

faculty supervisor, Dr. Janette Taper at 902-457-6256 or via e-mail at janette.taper@msvu.ca. This research activity has met the ethical standards of the University Research Ethics Board at Mount Saint Vincent University. If you have any questions or concerns about this study and wish to speak with someone who is not directly involved with this study, you may contact the University Research Ethics Board, by phone at 902-457-6350 or by e-mail at research@msvu.ca.

By signing this consent form, you are indicating that you fully understand the above information and agree to participate in this study.

Participant's signature

Date

Parent's/Guardian signature

Date

Researcher's signature

Date

One signed copy to be kept by the researcher, one signed copy to the participant.

APPENDIX H

Interview Guide

The interview will begin with the interviewer giving a brief overview of the purpose of the study. The interviewer will emphasize the importance of getting young females' opinions with regards to this topic area. The researcher will again reinforce that this is completely confidential and there are no right or wrong answers.

Introduction:

- Can you give me your definition of body image
- When do you think body image and diet became important to you?
- Are your peers concerned with body image? Diet?
- Do you ever talk to anyone about body image or dieting? Any concerns with them?

Diet Questions:

- What does dieting mean to you?
- Have you ever dieted? How long did it last?
- What made you want to start diet?
- What are some ways teens diet today?
- Have you ever felt pressure to diet? From whom or what?
- What are your influences to start dieting?

Body Image Questions:

- Have you ever felt pressure to look a certain way? Achieve a certain shape/size?
- What would you say are influences on body image? Most?
- Are you more worried about your body now or when you were younger?
- Do you know what body dissatisfaction is? Do you think you experience body dissatisfaction? How so?
- Have you ever been teased about size/shape of body? By whom? What did they say that hurt your feelings? How did it make you feel?
- Why do you think the development of a positive body image is important?
- Overall, How do you feel about your body?

Family Influence Questions:

- Do your parent's diet?
- Do they talk about theirs or your body shape or size?
- Have your parents provided information about body image or diet?
- Pressure from mother? Father? Who applies more pressure? In what ways do they feel pressured?
- Have any family members ever help you diet or encouraged you to diet?
- Do you see a difference in your relationship between your father and your mother? Explain. Who are you closer to?
- Do you feel more pressure from your mother or father to be a certain size and shape?

- Are physical appearance or thinness important in your family? Important to you?
- Do you experience conflict in your family? Explain.

Father-Daughter Questions:

- Are you close to your father? Do you spend much time with him?
- Would you say your relationship with your father is positive or negative?
- Has your father ever diet?
- Any comments from father about your body? Your weight? Thinness?
- Has your father ever compared your body shape or weight to anyone else? Movie stars? Peers?
- Have you ever been teased by father? If yes, in what way? What has he said or done to hurt your feelings?
- What kind of influence do you experience from your father?
- Explain your relationship with your father. Do you do things together? Are you influenced by him?

Conclusion:

- Anything else you care to share that we didn't discuss?

APPENDIX I

A Father's Influence on his Daughter's Body Image and Dieting Habits
Interview Checklist

Participant: _____

		Not Present	Slight	Marked/ Repeated
Appearance	Physically unkempt, unclean			
	Clothing untidy, dirty			
	Clothing atypical, unusual			
	Clothing typical, clean			
Posture	Slumped			
	Rigid, tense			
	Atypical, inappropriate			
Facial Expression	Anxiety, fear			
	Sadness			
	Anger			
	Pleasant			
General Body Movements	Restless, fidgety			
	No movement			
	Appropriate, comfort			
Quality of Speech	Loud, shouting			
	Quiet, decreased volume			
	Normal conversational			
Mood	Anger, hostility			
	Fear, anger			
	Apprehension			
	Euphoria, happiness			
	Content			
	Depression, sadness			