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Personality Types and Attachment Styles Underlying Body Dissatisfaction

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Introduction

- Personality and attachment style are important predictors of psychological well-being (Wilson, Latner, & Hayashi, 2013). Personality has been linked to body dissatisfaction, but little research has examined links between attachment style and body image (Davis et al., 2001; Cash, Theriault, & Annis, 2004).
- Neuroticism is generally linked to poorer mental health (Kvalem et al., 2006). Conscientiousness may be linked to poorer body image because it is linked to perfectionism.
- People with anxious attachment styles who are more sensitive to rejection from relationship partners may be more concerned with their appearance (Keating et al., 2013).
- Most existing research examines these patterns in college students or small community samples (Cash, Theriault, & Annis, 2004; Hardit et al., 2012; Keating et al., 2013; Latzer, Hochdorf, Bachar, & Canetti, 2002).
- Here we examine these relations in a large national sample of adults.

Method

- Data was obtained from 8,964 participants who took an online survey on NBC.com.
- Participants completed the Five Factor personality measure (Gosling, Rentfrow, & Swann, 2003), attachment style (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991), and a measure of satisfaction with overall physical appearance and weight (Sandhu & Frederick, 2015).

Results

- Regression analyses was used to test the extent to which each personality dimension and attachment style predicted each of the body image outcomes. All Beta values on the figure greater than .05 were significant, $p < .001$. Figure 1 excludes BMI as a predictor, Figure 2 includes BMI.
- Consistent with the hypothesis, anxious-fearful and neurotic individuals exhibited poorer body image. In contrast to the hypotheses, conscientiousness was linked to better body image.
- BMI, however, was by far the strongest predictor of body image.

Conclusion

- Conscientious individuals are often self-motivated, and likely require less validation of physical appearance than might neurotic individuals.
- Anxious attachment styles are more attuned to their negative social and emotional experiences than those with a secure attachment styles, which may explain its association with poor body image.
- Future academic interests should further study these constructs in order to identify preventative measures for groups at greatest risk for developing poor body image.

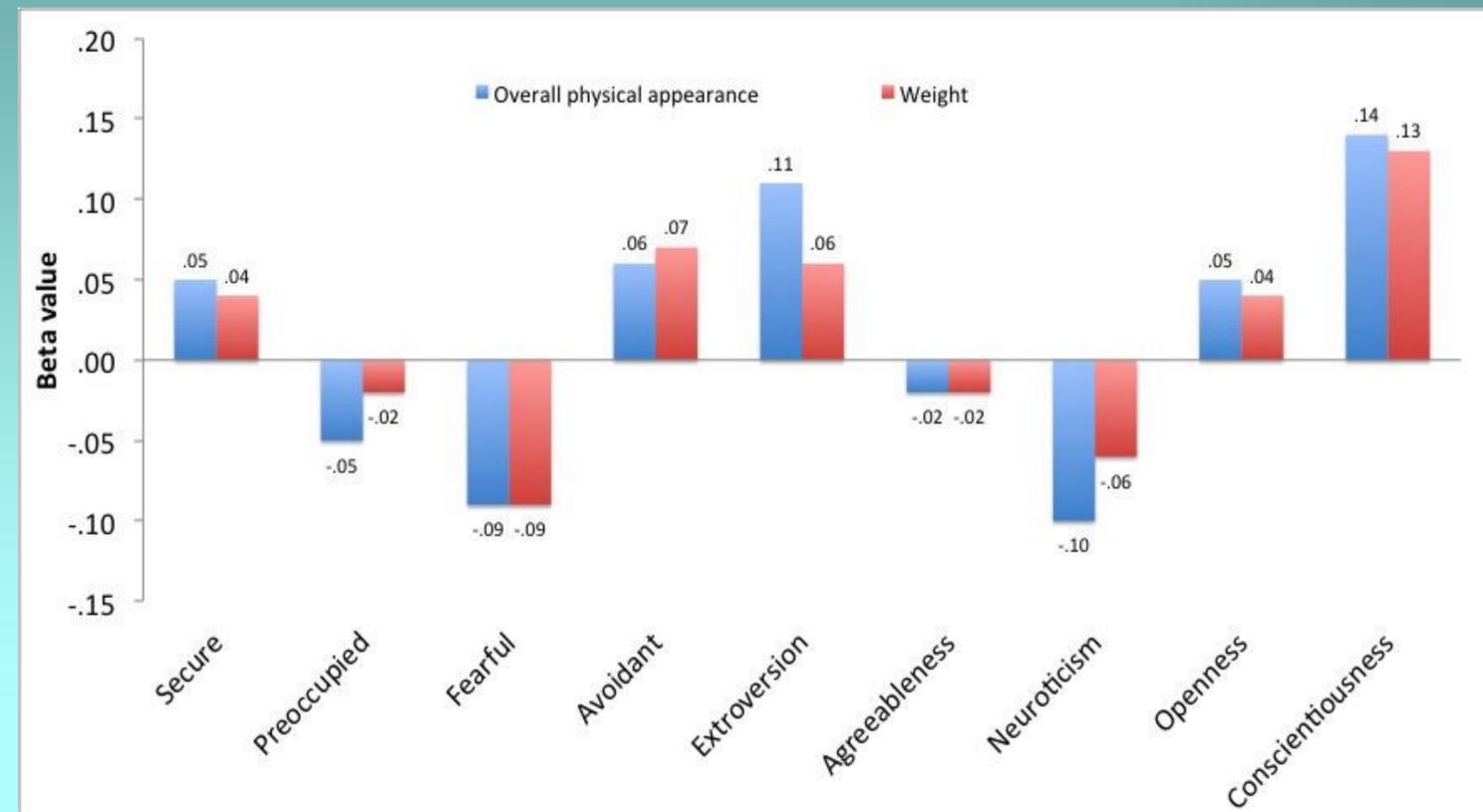


Figure 1: Associations between predictors and body image outcomes (excluding BMI)

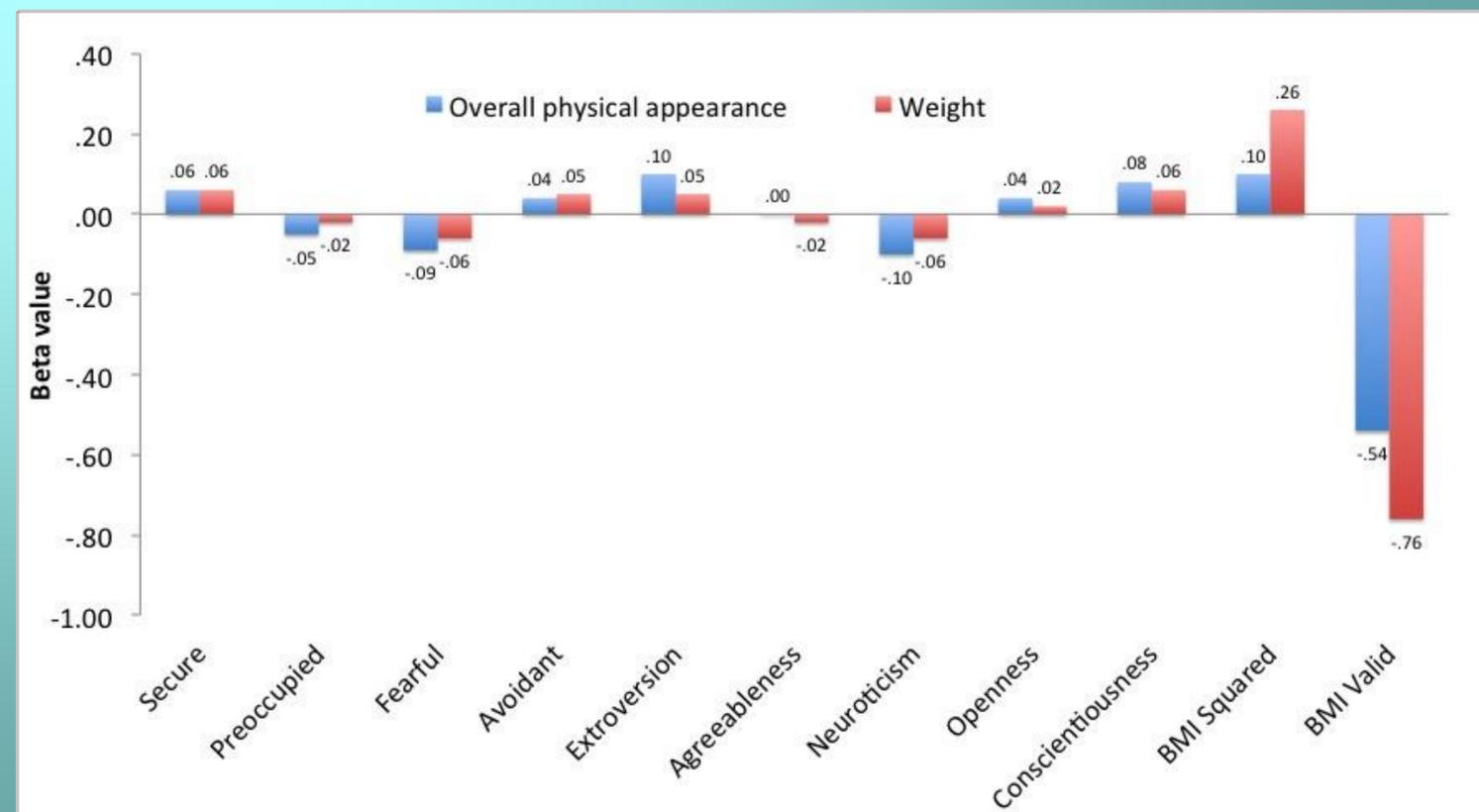


Figure 2: Associations between predictors and body image outcomes (including BMI)