**Be A Man: Macho Advertising Promotes Hyper-Masculine Behavior, Study Finds**

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It's not only women who are affected by sexist advertising. A new study suggests that print ads targeting men also encourage them to aspire to an unrealistic and potentially harmful brand of masculinity.

Psychologists…analyzed advertisements in men's magazines to see what messages they were sending about what it means to be a man. They found that a significant number of the advertisements portrayed or promoted one or more of the following beliefs:

* Danger is exciting.
* Toughness is a form of emotional self-control.
* Violence is manly.
* It's fine to be [uncaring] about women and sex.

The researchers defined these beliefs as four components of "hypermasculinity," an extreme gender ideal.

They found that 56 percent of the…advertisements [they] analyzed [showed] one or more of the four hypermasculine beliefs above. The beliefs that toughness equals control and that danger is exciting were more common than the belief that violence is manly or [being uncaring] towards women and sex. They also found that hypermasculine content was more likely to appear in magazines targeted to younger, lower-income, and less educated readers -- those the researchers concluded were most at-risk for [adopting] such beliefs and behaviors.

…The researchers claim hypermasculinity in ads is a problem because it exposes readers to these beliefs and normalizes them to some extent.

Previous research has linked hyper-masculine beliefs to social and medical problems in men, including drug use, violence towards women and dangerous driving.

Research has also suggested that men are increasingly affected by media messages about body image. In a 2008 study, male participants exposed to pictures of muscular men were more likely to feel [unhappy] with their own bodies. [Another] study…found that men's body self-esteem was linked to how hopeful they felt about romantic relationships.