

More evidence on the dangerous attitudes of men who ogle

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A new Edith Cowan University (ECU) study has provided further

evidence that men who frequently stare at women's bodies, rather than their faces, are more likely to harbor harmful attitudes and show tendencies that may lead to sexual assault.

The study by ECU psychology researcher Dr. Ross Hollett examined pervasive body gaze associations with explicit, implicit, and physiological sexual assault propensity measures.

The paper, "Evidence that pervasive body gaze behavior in heterosexual men is a social marker for implicit, physiological, and explicit sexual assault propensities," was [published](#) in the journal *Archives of Sexual Behavior*.

"The most significant finding is that pervasive body gaze behavior in heterosexual men towards women is strongly correlated with various markers of sexual assault propensity," Dr. Hollett said.

"Specifically, pervasive body gaze is linked with rape myth acceptance attitudes, prior perpetration of sexual assault, stronger implicit associations between erotica and aggression, and lower physiological emotional responses to images of partially dressed injured women," he said.

"This indicates that men who frequently engage in body gaze are more likely to hold insidious attitudes and exhibit behaviors that facilitate sexual assault and are potentially desensitized to victimized women."

Excessive body gaze shown to be reliable marker

This study builds on previous research by further validating the "pervasive body gaze scale," a self-report research method developed by Dr. Hollett in 2022, which has been verified through the use of eye tracking technology to measure gaze patterns.

"The previous study established correlations between body gaze behavior and victim-blaming attitudes," Dr. Hollett said.

"The current study extends these findings by demonstrating that pervasive body gaze also correlates with implicit and psychological measures related to sexual assault, as well as the actual perpetration of sexual assault, providing stronger evidence of the validity of the body gaze scale as a marker of sexual objectification and assault propensity."

Implications for the research

Dr. Hollett said understanding the attitudes and behaviors that precede or accompany sexual assault is crucial for predicting and reducing the likelihood of offending.

"Because pervasive body gaze is a readily observable social behavior, these new insights offer valuable guidance for detecting deviant sexual objectification attitudes," he said.

"This could be instrumental in developing risk assessments, estimating intervention efficacy, and enhancing public awareness about sexual assault and objectification."

Future research

Dr. Hollett said the next steps for the research involve implementing the pervasive body gaze scale in applied settings, such as prevention or intervention programs for university students or sex offenders.

"Longitudinal studies could track changes in body gaze behavior and its correlation with [sexual assault](#)-related outcomes over time," he said.

"Additionally, developing gaze intervention tasks to deliberately disrupt body gaze towards women and encourage face [gaze](#) behavior could be beneficial. This could involve developing brief computerized attention tasks that aim to reduce cognitive and attentional biases towards women's bodies."

More information: Ross C. Hollett et al, Evidence That Pervasive Body Gaze Behavior in Heterosexual Men Is a Social Marker for Implicit, Physiological, and Explicit Sexual Assault Propensities, *Archives of Sexual Behavior* (2024). [DOI: 10.1007/s10508-024-02953-y](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-024-02953-y)

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