Seventeen’s Changing Emphasis: 
A Content Analysis of Seventeen Magazine Cover Text
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There is much evidence that media exposure over time influences the development of a worldview conforming to that which is shown by the media. This is particularly true for adolescent girls who often internalize the media’s presentation of gender expectations and its “distinct signals about what is considered ‘feminine’ and ‘appropriate’.” 1 Seventeen magazine, an American adolescent lifestyle magazine, has been continually publishing since 1944 and has had consistently high readership among the teenage girls to whom it is marketed. A content analysis of Seventeen’s cover text from 1945 (the first full year of publishing), 1965, 1985, 2005, and 2013 (the most recent full year) was conducted to evaluate changes in subject matter. Findings include an increase in the prominence of materialism, female sexuality, and celebrity. While repeated exposure to these themes can be problematic for women of all ages, the growing emphasis upon them in a magazine for adolescents is especially troubling as teens are more likely to attempt adherence to the unrealistic standards with which they are presented. 2 This analysis of Seventeen’s cover subject matter suggests the unattainable expectations of the female ideal that American teenage girls may have of themselves and each other.

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