

## Western University

### **ETHNIC IDENTITY AND THE PERCEPTION OF FACIAL PROFILE AESTHETICS: A PRELIMINARY STUDY**

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In a multicultural society, the orthodontist is often faced with the challenge of interpreting an individual's aesthetic preferences, which depending on the individual might differ from Eurocentric standards. Psychological researchers have recognized that ethnicity is dynamic, and better defined as a perception of self, influenced by social interaction and cultural involvement. Ethnic identity was investigated using three broad ethnic groups (Caucasian-American, African-American and Asian-American) with an established Multicultural Ethnic Identity Measure (Revised, MEIM-R). Profiles for males and females of each group were constructed using published soft tissue data. Each profile was modified from subnasale to soft tissue B-point by displacing the upper and lower lips horizontally in 2mm increments from Ricketts' E-plane (-4mm, -2mm, 0mm (ideal), +2mm and +4mm). Six sets of profiles and demographic questions were presented through an online survey to groups of adult males and females (n = 380), stratified by ethnicity and supplied by Survey Monkey Audience® (surveymonkey.com). MEIM-R scores for the Caucasian-American groups were lower than the African- or Asian-American groups. With the exception of the African-American groups, significant profile preferences were observed. A moderate correlation ( $p < 0.01$ ) was observed between the MEIM-R score and a more retrusive profile preferences for the Caucasian-American female ethnic group. All other groups showed weak, non-significant correlations between profile preferences and ethnic identity. With the exception of the Caucasian-American female group, it appeared that ethnic identity did not contribute significantly to profile preference.

(Poster presented by Dr. Carine Bourassa)