

# Biological & Cultural differences in Gender ideals

Lecture 19

# Body

- women - golden ratio .7 waist to 1.0 hips or smaller (healthy, bear children)
- Large breasts = passed puberty, fertile
- Men broad shoulders and not small waist

- Women - hip sway walk
- Men - swagger walk

# Voice

- women - high pitched - younger & more estrogen = sexier
- Men - low pitched – more testosterone = stronger, bigger
- women's voices during ovulation become higher

# Smell

- Women only like male smell when fertile AND if a good genetic match
- Women strongly dislike smell of male relatives

- Men always like female smell
- When exposed to vaginal secretions men lose ability tell attractive from unattractive



- for females the ability to provide is important in a male (wealthy also female)
- want good genes AND provide for offspring until they can produce children of their own
- Job/car/\$ can alter how attractive man is

# Cultural differences in gender ideals:

- often based on socio-economic status



# Examples:

- lip disks (Mobali North Congo, Mursi - Ethiopia)

# neck rings

Africa and Asia



Scarification -  
many parts of  
Africa



# Tattoos



Dayak of  
Kalimantan  
Malaysia



- Height - (China)
- Fattening and whitening huts vs. anorexia and tanning salons
- Gavage

- lotus feet (China)

# Gavage

- = force-feeding. A practice in some Middle Eastern and North African countries (Mauritania) where fatness was considered a marriage asset in women - indicator of wealth



Teeth filing

thinness



# Thigh gap



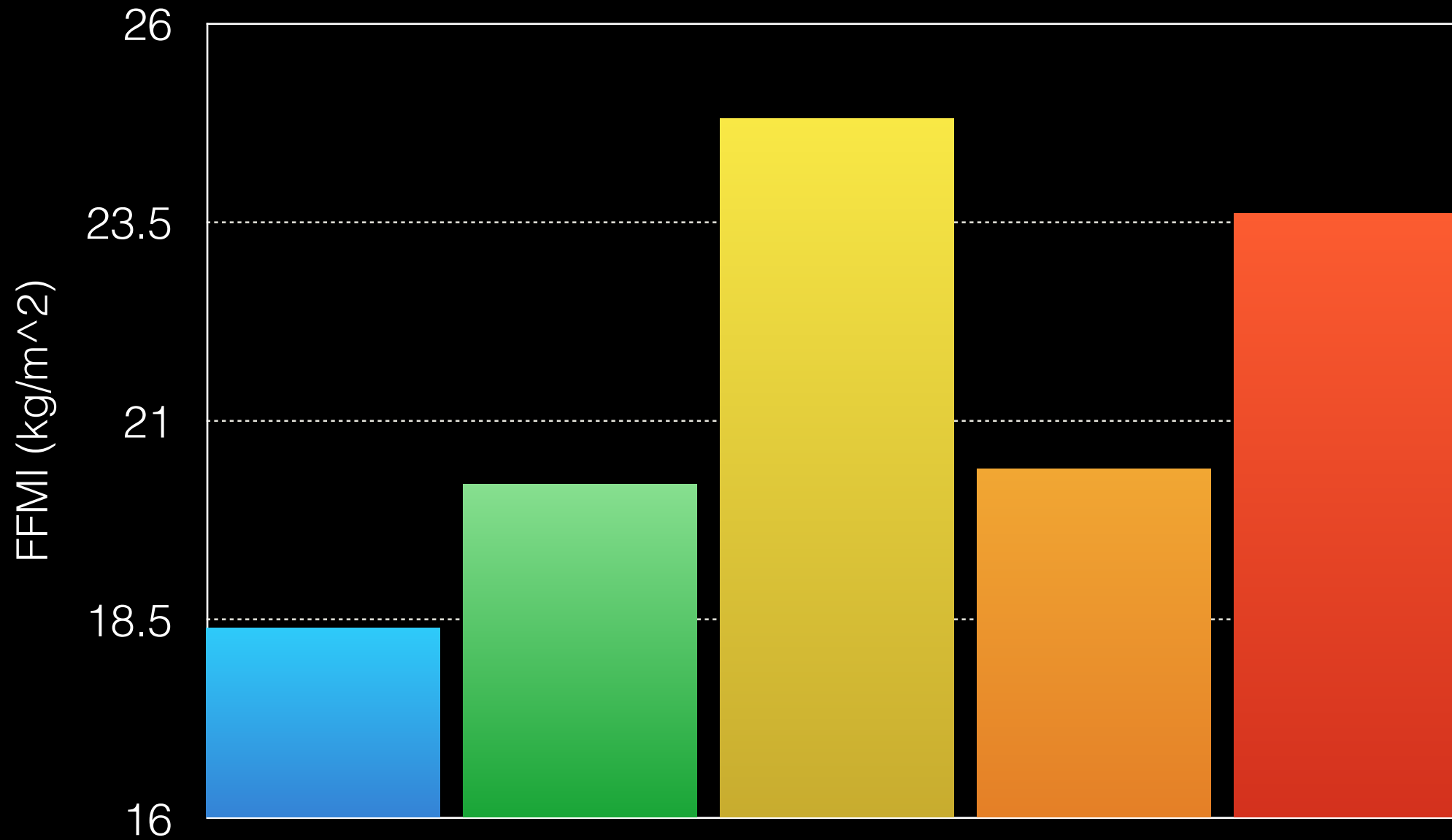


# Jackedness

*The Adonis Complex: The Secret  
Crisis of Male Body Obsession*  
(2000) Pope et al.



# Masculinity scores of 35 boys using the computerized Body Image Test



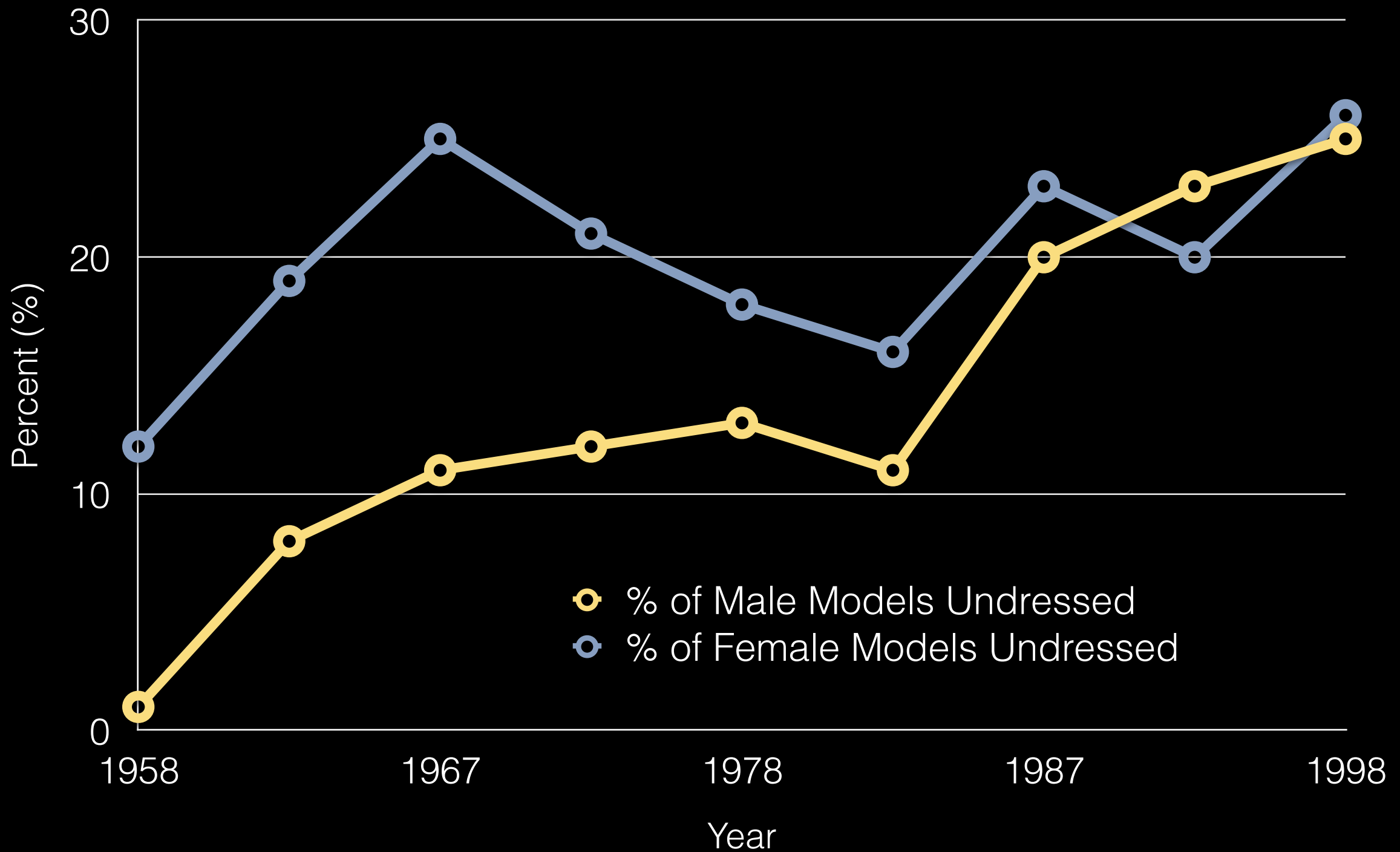
- Actual measured muscularity
- Chosen to represent body
- Chosen Ideal body
- Chosen as average body
- Chosen body most desired by opposite sex

# Body image among college men in three cultures:

- Harvard Medical school (?), U.S.
- University of Innsbruck, Austria
- Salpetriere Medical School, Paris
- Findings compared to men at a U.S. gym?

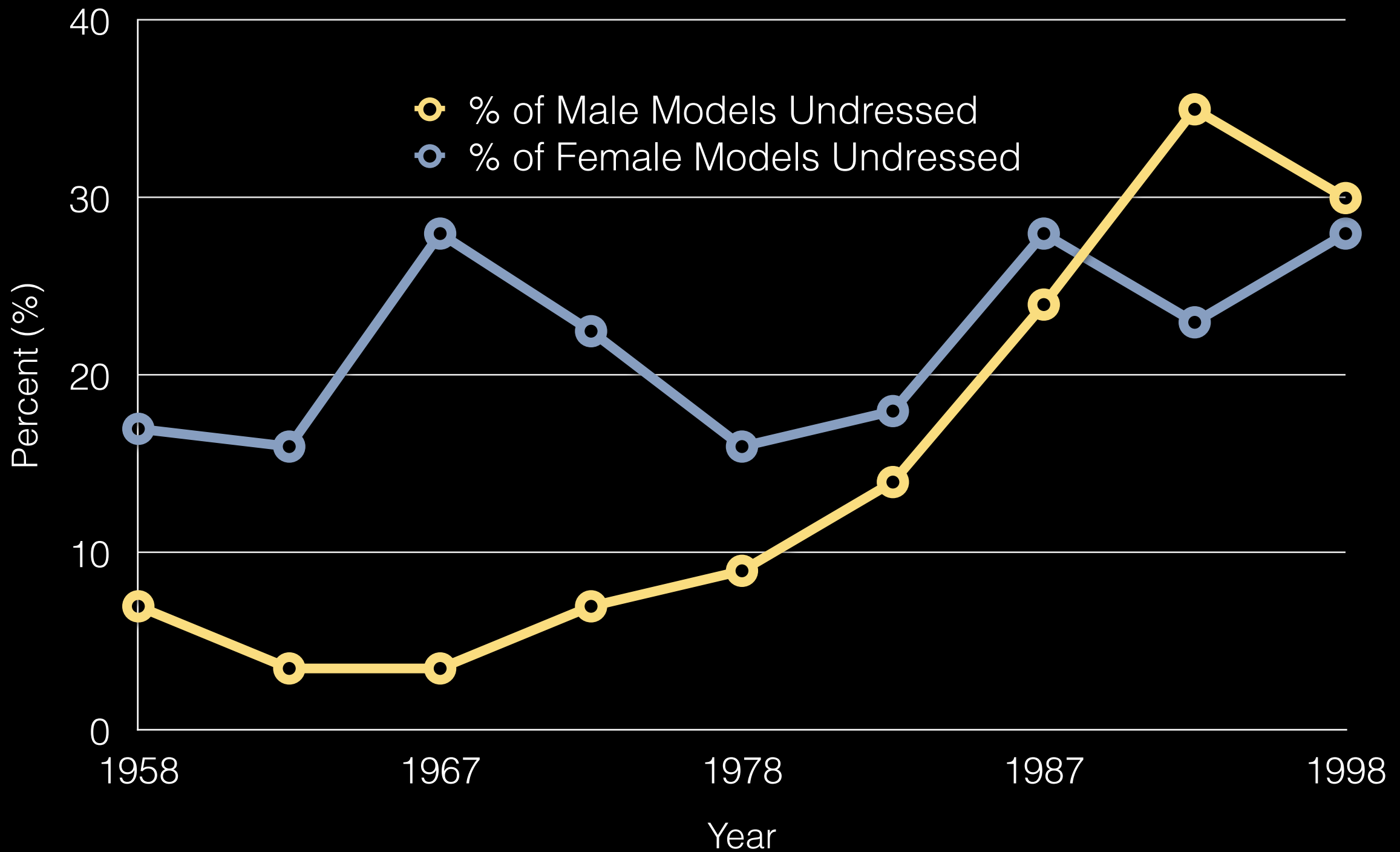
- **MORE** body dissatisfaction
- European men **as much as** American men
- All 3 chose an ideal body 28lbs. more muscle than their own
- All 3 chose body women prefer most 30 lbs. more muscle

# *Glamour Magazine*





# *Cosmopolitan Magazine*



Breast ironing

# Lonely hearts want adds

- India
- Italy
- Southern CA

# Reading:

- Shostak, Chapters 11 & 12