Beautiful Killer- High heels
Abstract

High heels have become a symbol of women for a long time. With a pair of suitable high heels, women can increase their confidence and make themselves more attractive. However, there are potential hazards risking women’s health, which resulted from incorrect ways of wearing high heels, including erroneous postures or pairs of uncomfortable high heels. Those hazards range from major ones to minor ones. What’s more, different types of high heels may result in various diseases. To keep far away from the ailments, we ought to know profoundly about as many details of high heels as we can. In the end, we can conclude the fact that specific types of high heels will give rise to typical ailments.

Keywords: High Heels, History, Diseases
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I. Introduction

I.1. Background

In the “In Time With You”, a Taiwanese drama, the main actress once said that “Time makes every girl expect it to elapse faster so that she can be mature enough to own the first pair of high heels in her life. Nonetheless, it suddenly occurs to me the white-colored cloth shoes in my teens.” To us, we almost wear white-colored cloth shoes when attending school or hanging out, so it may be too early for us to understand the retrospection of the white-colored cloth shoes. The age of seventeen years old is when girls step into a new world of young ladies, and meanwhile, we eagerly look forward to putting on a pair of high heels one day and entering workplaces with full confidence. Carrie, a character in “Sex and the City”, said that “Being a fashionable girl is not an easy job; hence, we have sufficient reasons to possess shoes.” As a matter of fact, once a girl has high heels, it is just like having self-confidence. It is necessary to get a pair of high heels if you want to successfully transform into a real woman. Still, simultaneously, women also have a harsh time with their high heels. After wearing them, women may suffer from various kinds of diseases, which then do severe harm to them or even discourage them from wearing high heels. What kinds of diseases will high heels give rise to with them worn on women’s feet? Furthermore, why do women still insist on wearing high heels after they get injured? On the other hand, why do others quit wearing them in the totally same case? We are going to investigate into the cases in which contemporary women now are and find out as more detailed information as we can.

I.2 Motivation

As a saying stated by Tom Ford, “What’s special about women without high heels?” it implies the high dependence on high heels for modern women. Nowadays, high heels have become representatives of women. Every woman is crazy about as well as fascinated by them. Owning the first pair of high heels is the most crucial turning point in a woman’s life. Once you can successfully dominate one, you will be capable of flawlessly confiding certain confidence which is only born by women. With nobility and elegance, you will absolutely draw everyone’s attention. Vulgar girl as you are, after wearing the glamorous high heels, you will turn into an enticing swan from an ugly duckling and even catch others’ eyes. It is the magic of high heels that makes every girl yearn for her own one when she is just a little kid. However, not until one put on a pair of high heels does she eventually realize the painful discomfort.
Additionally, it is no exaggeration to say that the discomfort for women is for good. As a consequence, how do women deal with the problems that have already happened to them or do they just neglect them in regard of work requirement?

I.3 Research Questions

In modern times, women have a tendency to wear high heels as a symbol of fashion. Walking along the street, looking around carefully, not only will you discern that almost every woman or even little girl wears a pair of high heels, but they also come in a variety of colors and shapes. Yet, it is believed that different shapes of high heels may bring about different high heel-related diseases. What’s more, only certain types of high heels will lead to certain diseases. Nowadays, the diseases of high heels have become a huge burden for women. How do high heels affect women straightly? What kinds of high heels will cause certain diseases? Why women still cannot live without high heels? And what tough actions do they take to stem them from contracting the diseases? To summarize, there are three following questions we want to find out.

1. Why do women feel like wearing high heels?
2. What reasons will increase the rate of gaining harm for women wearing high heels?
3. How do women nowadays protect themselves from suffering from high heel-related diseases?

I.4 Literature Review

I.4.1 The history of high heels

According to the website of history culture learning, we can conclude the following facts. It is believed that the initial high heels which received their popularity were derived from Italy when the Renaissance dominated Europe. At that time, square-toed shoes were popular with the males, while the wealthy females, ministers and prostitutes were fascinated with a kind of shoes named chopine. Nonetheless, it was so difficult and painful to walk with these shoes that those who wore them needed supporting from others. Therefore, some people began to come up with reformation.

**Sixteenth century**: Catherine De Medici entrusted a shoe maker to create a pair of tailor-made high heels, which could make her look taller and more fashionable. This sort of high heel was characterized by its rear being higher than its front and gradually became sought-after.

**Seventeenth century**: The renowned France emperor, Louis XIV, asked his shoe maker to make a pair of four inches high shoes and paint their heels red, for the purpose of showing his authority and confidence. Before long, these shoes
got popular with other sovereigns in Europe.

**Eighteenth century:** Owing to the appearance of Rococo, the style of high heels obtained a variety of changes. They were often made of diverse materials such as satin, cotton and lambskin, with gorgeous decorations attached on them like embroidery and jewelry. People even wore leather covers on the of their shoes when going out.

**Nineteenth century:** At this time, high heels acquired a significant development, which was that high heels seemed to turn into women’s exclusive fashion and that most men no longer wore them. Women wore different type of high heels according to different occasions. The occurrence of industrialization also made the technique of manufacturing shoes more profitable.

**Twentieth century:** As a result of moral liberalization, designers tried to combine high heels with sandals, making this new product look more gracious. High and slim heels along with enchanting forms played an important role in this period.

**Twenty-first century:** High heels exactly transform into a symbol of women. Wherever you go, you can find so many females captivated by their high heels, ignoring the potential hazards of the torturous stuff. In light of this risk, some people endeavor to invent a kind of high heels which is able to reduce the damage.

### I.4.2 Diseases which caused by wearing high heels

Despite women’s liking for high heels, there will be some severe, unpredictable, or even fatal consequences if you wear them inappropriately or for a long time. Women should take these consequences into profound consideration before they regret putting on every pair of high heels. Therefore, we briefly introduce these diseases to women who may concern so as to warn them of the ailments. In light of the website of Dr. Lee’s clinic and Dr. wang gi Lee’s orthopedics column, we can successfully define the following diseases.

**Calluses and corns:** The main reason why these two injuries form is owing to constant compression and friction, causing the skin to become harder. The types and sizes of shoes are the main factors of constant friction. Corns and calluses tend to form on the outer surface of the little toe, the backside of the toe, and especially the bulgy part of the bone.

**Varicosity:** Since the blood cannot flow back to heart without any obstacle, the blood pressure increases, and the gravity makes the vein valve have to stem the blood from returning with more efforts. The pressure being consistently overhigh, it contributes to destruction. Therefore, the blood will end up silting up in the legs’ veins. The legs’ veins on the surface then lose elasticity, becoming
abnormal dilation, bulge, and hyperemia of the veins, and even swelling and distortion. Accordingly, legs will bring agony and a variety of discomfort.

**Sore waist and knees:** After wearing high heels, the pelvis tends to move forward and then affect the gravity force to come forward as well. However, in order to maintain stability, one definitely has to thrust out the chest, curve the backside, stretch the waist backward, and so on. One must do these poses so that she can succeed in striking a balance. Yet, the abiding stretch of the lumbar vertebra will let the muscles of the waist be in the condition of contracting nervously in the long run and appear the phenomenon of waist muscles tiredness.

**Thumb valgus:** It refers to due to the innate structure of toes or acquired incorrect walking position, wearing pointy-toed high heels will give rise to the thumb’s bone bulging outwardly. However, the outward bone curves towards the index finger owing to the extrusion of the shoes; if being a lot more serious, the outward bone will overlap the index finger.

**Pinkie varus:** The reason why it brings about is the same as thumb valgus. Being oppressed, the little toe’s bone bulges outwardly. As a consequence, combining little toe varus with thumb valgus is called toe valgus.

**Onyxis(Paronychia):** It is often happen to the thumb. Both sides of the finger nail will swell, be compressed tightly, and be painful. Afterwards, it may fester and even cause a sarcoma to multiply. Since the thumb has the biggest finger, if you cut your nails in an inappropriate way or walk in an improper way, and plus, the narrow shoe heads of high heels, the disease will occur in the long run. If it is severe, one has to undergo an operation to pull it out.

**Hammer toes:** The unbalanced muscles contribute to the fact that the ligament and tendon contract unnaturally, and hence, cause the toes to curve like a hammer. The reason why it forms is wearing unfitting shoes constantly; thus, it makes the toes have no enough room to stretch and have to often keep in a curved shape. As a result, the toes will transform owing to the long-standing oppression. It will even lead to dislocation of the toes, and then it requires an operation to treat the disease.

**Achilles tendon tightening:** Achilles tendon is located in the back of the ankle. If we wear high heels in the long-term, the achilles tendon will curl up and cannot stretch. Therefore, it makes our feet cannot tread smoothly.

**Plantar fasciitis:** The soles of the feet are squashed and then pull and drag the plantar fascia while we are walking. It is the heels that especially bear the pressure; hence, it can lead to inflammation. When you wear high heels, the likelihood of contracting plantar fasciitis will have a considerable increase relatively. Whenever you take one step, all the weight of the body move forward,
and it causes the plantar fasciitis to pull and drag abnormally, referring to the emergence of plantar fasciitis.

**Former plantar metatarsal pain:** The toe metatarsal joint causes the pain of arthritis. It is the perpetual forward pressure of body that contributes to this kind of disease. Accordingly, the probability of suffering from this disease will be relatively high.

**Lumbar lordosis:** It is resulted in by the backward of the sacral and the backbend of the thoracic, forming a large arc. Still, wearing high heels over a long period of time is just like tip-toed walking, and the sacral have to exert lastingly. Hence, it will give rise to not only lumbar lordosis but also sore back and waist.

### II. Research Methods

#### II.1 Participants

Participants of the questionnaire consisted of 260 women of different ages and occupations. There are 254 valid questionnaires and 6 invalid questionnaires. After date analysis, we were able to understand women’s perceptions on high heels systematically.

#### II.2 Instruments

**II 2.1 Literature search**

To do this study, we studied approximately twenty articles on the Internet and from library, including the papers and magazines related to high heels. Then, we collected the information which we needed and interpreted it into our outlook.

**II.2.2 Questionnaire**

The questionnaire included sixteen questions.

#### II.3 Procedure

The procedure of the study involved three phases. First, we searched for the articles about high heels. After reading them, we highlighted the information as well as took notes with a view to absorbing it precisely. Second, we designed the questionnaire according to our research questions. After receiving the questionnaire from these participants, we analyzed the statistic and gained our findings. Finally, we
interviewed 25 people, inclusive of teachers, students in our school and counter sales in the department stores. It was hoped that these steps could help us complete our research effectively.

### III. Findings

In the 254 valid questionnaires, we interviewed 40 students, 15 bank clerks, 40 faculties, 50 saleswomen, 70 counter sales and 40 people of other jobs. From these questionnaires we acquired the following results.

#### Figure 1 The number of women wearing high heels

In accordance with Figure 1, we can see that 89% women have the habit of wearing high heels and that only 11% women don’t have the habit. Therefore, we can infer that it is common for women to wear high heels.

#### Figure 2 The number of women worrying about wearing high heels

Furthermore, we do a survey on those women wearing high heels. Surprisingly, in Figure 2, we discover that up to 62% women worry about the damage and side effects of wearing high heels. But why do they still have to wear high heels?

#### Figure 3 The reasons why women wear high heels
As we can see in Figure 3, 34% women wear high heels for the purpose of suiting with their dressing, while 24% women do that out of the requirement of work. Secondly, 16% women wear high heels because they can make themselves look higher and beautify the shape of body. On the contrary, merely 9% do that because they are pursuing fashion. Owing to the above observation, women are afraid of getting injured, however, in order to make themselves look more gorgeous, they are still willing to put on their high heels to increase their confidence. Nonetheless, it is their companies’ regulations that confine women’s wear high heels.

Figure 4 Women’s injuries caused by high heels

Based on the statistics (Figure 4), we gained the consequence that in the 254 valid questionnaires, the percentage of those who don’t get harm is 13%; nevertheless, up to 78% women are actually wounded, and even 9% women suffer from serious diseases due to high heels but do not know what the diseases are. The following figures imply us how many women suffer from different injuries.

Figure 5 Victims of different high heel-related diseases

According to Figure 5, we can know 52 women have Calluses; 33 women have Varicosity; 31 women have sore waist and knees; 21 women have corns; 19 women have Hallux valgus; 16 women have Plantar fasciitis; 13 women have surdy shanks; 12 women have former plantar metatarsal pain; 7 women have Oyxis; 5 women have Pinkie varus; 5 women have other diseases; 2 women have Lumbar lordosis; 1 woman has Hammer toes, and 1 woman has achilles tendon tightening.

We analyzed the rates of how many days women who are wounded wear high heels.

And the consequence is as follows:
Figure 6  The relations between women suffering from high heel-related diseases and the days they wear high heels

From Figure 6, obviously, we received that the rates of being injured rise with days women wearing high heels increasing. The percentage of women wearing high heels less than 1 day a week getting injured is 35%. The percentage of women wearing high heels once a week getting injured is 50%. The percentage of women wearing high heels 2 to 4 days a week getting injured is 62%. The percentage of women wearing high heels more than 5 days getting injured is up to 78%. The chart showed that the rates keep ascending.

Figure 7  The relations between women uncertain about their ailments and the days they wear high heels

In Figure 7, we discovered 18% women who feel uncomfortable but not know the reason wear high heels less than 1 day a week, 12.5% women wear high heels 1 day a week, 15% women wear high heels 2 to 4 days a week and 8% women wearing high heels more than 5 days. We could deduce that women who seldom wear high heels still feel discomforted but cannot find the reason and that women who often wear high heels find out what the damages are more easily due to their long-term habits of wearing high heels. In other words, the damages resulted from wearing high heels are actually accumulated day by day rather than reflected in one day.

Figure 8  The relations between women not contracting any diseases and the days they wear high heels
they wear high heels

We probed into the rates of women wearing high heels without being hurt. 47% women who don’t get hurt wear high heels less than 1 day a week, 37.5% women wearing high heels 1 day a week, 23% women wear high heels and 14% women wearing high heels more than 5 days a week (Figure 8). The rates decrease by degrees evidently. Therefore, we could infer that the frequency of wearing high heels indeed affects the possibility of getting hurt.

![Figure 9 The requirements of standing for a long time for all walks of people](image)

From Figure 9, we can find that counter sales and faculty need to stand for a long time for their work, so we will analysis of counter sales and faculty about how many days do they wear high heels in a week.

![Figure 10 How many days counter sales wear high heels in a week](image)

![Figure11 How many days faculties wear high heels in a week](image)

On the basis of the statistic we deduced the conclusion. Take counter sales and teachers for example. As a result of regulations of companies, the percent of more than 5 days when counter sales need to wear high heels is 73%. As for teachers,
because they don’t have such regulations, so the percent of more than 5 days when
teachers wear is 3%. On the contrary, the percent of less than one day is 51%. To sum
up, they will consider their physical conditions and decide whether wear high heels to
go to work despite the pursuit of beauty. Apparently, women will strike a balance
between beauty and health.

**Figure 12 If women know how to protect themselves from getting harm**

From Figure 12 as we can see, 98% women have their own solutions to
relieving pain and discomfort due to wearing high heels and merely 2% women
don’t have a means to protect themselves.

**Figure 13 The solutions women protect themselves from getting harm**

According to figure 13, we found that 84 women wear platform shoes because
they can prevent the situation of shoes lower in the front sides and higher in the heels.
The lumbar doesn’t need to exert to make one upright, which curtails the rates of
experiencing sore waist and back and lumbar lordosis consequentially. By the way, 80
women broaden toecaps of their high heels to reduce friction and compression, which
keeps women themselves from contracting calluses, corns, thumb valgus, and pinkie
varus. As for the rest of women, there are 51 of them wearing medical compression
stockings so as to stem the emergence of varicosity. Furthermore, 47 women lift up
their legs; 44 of them do leg massaging; 35 women wear air cushion shoes; 34
females immerse their legs; 7 of them use insoles, and 1 for others.
Ⅳ. Conclusion

After a series of research, discussion, and analysis, we assume that high heels are indeed necessities for modern women. They can’t live without high heels desperately with an eye to the confidence they attain from wearing high heels. Nonetheless, a majority of women are often annoyed by high heel-related diseases. Therefore, they will strike a balance between beauty and health and take some essential measures to protect themselves as well.

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