

# Child beauty pageants harm mental health fear

Consumer health website, [www.itsmyhealth.com.au](http://www.itsmyhealth.com.au) reports claims from Australia's peak psychiatric body that USA-style child beauty pageants could potentially harm the mental health of contestants. Responding to proposals to replicate Melbourne's recent Universal Royalty Beauty Pageant in other states, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP) said such events sexualise children and are exploitative. "Direct participation and competition for a beauty prize where infants and girls are objectified and judged against sexualised ideals can have significant mental health and developmental consequences that impact detrimentally on identity, self esteem, and body perception," said Dr Nick Kowalenko, chair of the College's Faculty of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. He said the pageant organisers claims that such competitions "emphasise 'a positive fun-filled atmosphere' is misleading and ill-informed. The pageant met with protest from a number of quarters with groups such as Pull the Pin on Beauty Pageants for Children calling for laws to ban these types of 'toddlers in tiaras' competitions, Sky News reported. It also said a Victorian state government Child Safety Commissioner had been to observe the event. The full article is available at <http://www.itsmyhealth.com.au/healthy-living/parenting-and-babies/child-beauty-pageants-harm-mental-health-fear>.

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