can anchor consumers' perceptions of other claims. The spillover, or “halo effect” from puffed claims will be discussed later in the context of combined comparatives.

This chapter will review consumer behavior research dealing with implied superiority claims and the legal treatment of these claims in the area of deception. The next chapter will introduce combined comparatives, a special form in which implied superiority claims are made.

**Consumer Research on Implied Superiority Claims**

A considerable stream of research has investigated the potential for deception resulting from implied superiority claims in advertising (e.g., Gardner 1975; Olson and Dover 1978; Shimp 1978; Russo, Metcalf and Stephens 1981; Shimp and Preston 1981; Garfinkel 1983; Gaeth and Heath 1987). Researchers have been particularly interested in different forms of comparative claims. Shimp (1978), for instance, focused on incomplete comparisons, or comparative claims where the referent attributes or competitors are not mentioned. He found that consumers naturally infer referents when presented with incomplete claims, interpreting phrases such as “Mennen goes on warmer and drier” as “Mennen goes on warmer and drier than any other deodorant on the market.”

Johar (1995) was also interested in incomplete comparisons and focused on involvement as a moderator variable in generating inferences. She found that only those subjects who were highly involved with the product or purchase generated invalid inferences when exposed to incomplete comparison claims. On the other hand, subjects who were not highly involved did not naturally generate such inferences. These subjects inferred a comparison referent only when the phrasing of the questions suggested they do