DESIGNING OF FUNCTIONAL SARI BLOUSE FOR ARTHRITIC WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

For this study 30 arthritic women between 50-60 years of age were selected. It was noticed that, all the constructed sari blouses were liked very much by respondents however design 2 (Blouse with side opening from waist to sleeve end on right side and Velcro tape stitched on Center front up to half length) was rated as very good and good by higher percentage (47-53%) of the respondents followed by design-5 (Blouse with sleeve open on top from arm ski to bottom of sleeve by 33-46%, design 4 - (Blouse with side opening on right from waist to arm ski with zipper and press buttons) was rated(33%) fair to good.

INTRODUCTION

Arthritic is often called the country’s number one crippling diseases. Although arthritis is a condition that primarily occurs in adults but it can occur at any other age. The word “arthritis is synonymous with rheumatism” a term preferred in Great Britain and also used in America. The literal meaning of arthritis is inflammation of the joints, but the term is now broadly applied to nearly 100 different conditions. The most common form of arthritis in young is called Juvenile rheumatoid arthritis, which cause aching and pain in joints and connective tissues throughout the body, not all of which involve inflammation.

The key factor in the most serious form of arthritis is inflammation, evidenced by heat, redness, retardation of growth, swelling and pain in the fingers, wrists, elbows, knees, hips and feet. As the disease progresses the joints may stiffen and in some cases so distorted that movement becomes difficult or even impossible.

Such conditions restrict the person’s activities and make them dependent on others to meet their basic needs. Dependency in self-care is often the first sign of depression and anxiety. Being emotionally upset they are hesitant to work, even dressing-undressing; a difficult task to manages for them.

Independence is a great boost to morale and a desirable goal. Therefore, in order to encourage independence and minimize the discomfort in the process of dressing-undressing garments worn by them must be functional to suit the needs of such handicaps.

Osteoarthritis, a degenerative joint disease referred to as ‘wear and tear’ arthritis is usually associated with aging. Rheumatoid arthritis, an inflammatory disease affects the joints as well as other parts of the body. Symptoms of both types include stiffness, joint pain, joint swelling, bony enlargement and subcutaneous nodules often leading to the inability to carry out daily living activities that were once routine. (Ford and Tolmar 1983).

The dressing skills and clothing needs and preferences of an 85 years old arthritic woman who used a wheel chair were assessed by Park and Janice (1989) in a case study and it was concluded that garments could be designed to be comfortable when the body was in to variety of positions. The features of the garments designed for the study were one and one-half -length waist band, raglan sleeves, knit fabrics, pressure tape closures, front openings and action pleats.

The investigation on ‘Clothing and dressing needs of people with arthritis’ by Reich and Otten (1991) found that the physical effect of arthritis were manifested in clothing problems.
such as lack of comfort and unsuitable garment design. Proper fit was found to be a significant problem for females. Hand and wrist problems were significantly related to difficulties in manipulating fasteners. The sample for the study consisted of 800 elderly residents of Arizona (USA), suffering from rheumatoid arthritis or osteoarthritis.

Koester and Laber (1984) studied on ‘Diffusion of information about clothing to orthopaedically disabled adults’. The purpose of the study was to propose recommendations for

**Specifications of the constructed functional garments. (Blouses)**

1. Blouse with smocking on center back.
2. Blouse with side opening from waist to sleeve end on right side and Velcro tape stitched on center front up to half-length.
3. Blouse with sleeve opening on top from shoulder bottom of sleeve with zipper and velcro tape on center front.
4. Blouse with side opening on right from waist to arm ski with zipper and press buttons.
5. Blouse with sleeve open on top from arm ski to bottom of sleeve and Velcro on center front.
6. Blouse with side opening on right from arm ski to sleeve length and press buttons on side seam.
improved diffusion of clothing information to orthopaedically disabled adults. A priority index for potential expansion organized the information sources with regard to perceived availability, use and preferences and listed them in rank order, indicating needs for potential development. Prioritization indicated the following sources to be most deserving of developmental efforts such as country extension bulleting, video taped programs, catalogues and pamphlets.

Functional garments are those which can be put on and taken off with little or no help of other individual, permit enough freedom of movement and are comfortable when worn on body. The garments must be simple in style, attractive in design and enhance the appearance of the wearer. (Tatte and Glisson, 1961) With this goal, a study was conducted to design the functional sari blouses for arthritic women.

The objectives were:
- To determine the problems faced by arthritic women in putting on–taking off their garments.
- To alter design and reconstruct the garments according to their requirements.
- To assess the suitability of constructed sari blouses.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

For this study 30 arthritic women between 50-60 years of age were selected. An interview schedule was prepared and the respondents were interviewed personally. In accordance to the requirements and problems expressed by the respondent, the blouses were selected and functional designs were sketched. Incorporating few alterations, blouses of the selected respondents were reconstructed, and were given for trial. A suitability index consisting of five rating scales was prepared to assess the suitability of reconstructed blouses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the work have been discussed under the following sub heads:

**Physical limitations**: Majority of the respondents had intense pain, swelling and stiffness in all body joints. It resulted limited arm movements; they could not even raise their hands above the head. They were also unable to stand for long, since they had stooped body. A kyphosis condition distorted the shape of back like the torso and thus prevented them from sitting straight. Hence they were unable to perform any job including dressing and undressing at their own and were dependent on their family members for this task.

**Existing dressing pattern**: Sari blouse and petticoat without adequate self help features were the usual existing dresses of most of the respondents. Hooks and eyes in blouse and string in petticoat was the only fastener being used by them. They faced many problems with these dresses specially in wearing sari blouse. Loose blouse spoils the looks of the wearer. Fitting plays very important role in comfort and appearance of the person.

**Dressing problems encountered due to physical disability and improper designing**:

1. Tight fitted blouse difficult to put on and take off due to difficulty in lifting their arms, especially right arm.
2. Fasteners difficult to operate due to lack of fine coordination of fingers.

**Features incorporated while designing of functional Sari blouse**: Considering the problems and preferences of the respondents, the following features were incorporated in the designing of functional sari blouse.

- Sleeves with opening, either at central line, at seam line with zipper and press buttons.
- Blouse with smocking to provide proper fitting as well as comfort ability in dressing.
• Easy opening: Center front full opening or side opening with zipper and Velcro tape in blouse to put on and take off.
• Fasteners like Velcro tape, press buttons and zippers easy to manipulate.

Construction of the functional garments:
Incorporating the above-mentioned features, six blouses of each respondent were altered and reconstructed and were given for trial to assess the suitability and comfort.

Constructed blouses with alterations in the design were given to the respondents for one week for getting feedback from the respondents. Based on it, the designed sari blouses were rated on a four-point scale. The collected information was pooled and analyzed.

CONCLUSION
It was noticed that, all the constructed sari blouses were liked very much by respondents however design 2 (Blouse with side opening from waist to sleeve end on right side and Velcro tape stitched on Center front up to half length) was rated very good and good by a higher percentage (47-53%) of the respondents followed by design-5 (Blouse with sleeve open on top from arm ski to bottom of sleeve by 33-40%, design 4 - Blouse with side opening on right from waist to arm ski with zipper and press buttons) was rated (33%) fair to good.

Table 1. Ratings given by respondents for the constructed sari blouses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designs of Sari blouse</th>
<th>Percentage of the respondents and ratings (n=15)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>20.00 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>53.33 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>33.33 (5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>20.00 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>33.33 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>13.33 (2)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(Figures in parentheses indicate number of the respondents)

REFERENCES