

research in brief

Special Clothing Needs

All women, including those with arthritis, want clothing that's comfortable, easy to maintain, durable, functional, and attractive. The variables of function and comfort are increasingly important when joints become painful, unstable, stiff, or permanently damaged due to arthritis.

The major purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of recommended self-help and comfort features in clothing for arthritic women. Specifically, the study was designed to: (1) identify fasteners that are easily manipulated by women with arthritis and (2) determine the use of and

preference for self-help and comfort features in the clothing of women with arthritis.

Evaluations of 100 arthritic women were done to study their potential for selected dressing activities. The ability of these women to manipulate a series of garment fasteners was assessed, and their preferences for these fasteners recorded. The women provided information about use and preference for garment styles.

The fasteners most easily used by women with arthritis were: no lap zipper with large teeth and ring tab, flat 5/8-inch rimmed button with a shank, and vertical buttonhole. Some comfort features were preferred by women with arthritis. These included: (1) center front to below the waist openings and (2) no waist, one-piece dress styles.

Clothing Needs of Women with Arthritis. Margaret Baer, Merry Jo Dallas, and Louise White. Fort Collins: Colorado State University, 1977.

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