

FOOTWEAR PROBLEMS AMONG ADULT PUNJABI WOMEN OF CHANDIGARH

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Abstract: *Women need suitable and comfortable footwear according to the role they have to play both at home and their work place. Not only clothing but footwear also plays a significant role in women's life for every occasion. As the large number of women is involved in outdoor activities, they are becoming more conscious about their health and fitness. Hence, they need properly fitted or little loose footwear as their choice. The city of Chandigarh has a large number of working women. The present study is undertaken to find the preference of fit of footwear and footwear problems among adult Punjabi women of Chandigarh. A total of 600 women form the sample of this study. The results thus shows that adult Punjabi women of Chandigarh, i) mostly prefer exactly fitted footwear ii) 55.2% women reported foot problems mainly heel pain.*

Keywords: Fit of footwear, Footwear problems, Punjabi women

1. Introduction

To facilitate the foot its function, humans clad the foot in a variety of coverings (footwear) to give protection and warmth (Hawes and Sovak 1994). Properly constructed footwear improves compatibility between foot and footwear, thus contributing to fit and comfort (Kouchi 1995; Rossi 1988; Hawes et al. 1994). It helps us keep balance. It is not only essential for support and locomotion, it also easily influences lifestyle. "The foot is a part of the human body, and footwear can be studied as the clothed foot just like fashion is treated as a clothed body" (Kawamura 2016). Ill- fitting footwear may lead to biomechanical imbalance and ultimately give rise to different foot problems such as blisters, corns, and ankle injury, acute or chronic pain in the foot (Killian, Nishimoto, and Page 1998). Tight fitting shoes and high heels is often the cause of foot problems in women like hammer toes, blisters, bunions, corns, and calluses. Proper designing of footwear is of great importance for proper fit and comfort of foot within the shoe to avoid foot discomfort and deformity. The medial longitudinal arch of the foot helps to protect the foot from injury (Xiong et al. 2010).

A higher percentage of women in urban area, like Chandigarh, are becoming more and more involved in activities outside the home; and thus majority of times they remain in shoes. As the population of women involved in outdoor activities is rising, they are becoming conscious about their health and fitness. Hence, they need footwear that is suitable and comfortable for various occasions. If the footwear is not of right size or fit it leads to body fatigue, locomotion and foot problems. The present study is aim to find the preference of fit of footwear and problems related to footwear practices among adult Punjabi women of Chandigarh.

2. Materials and Methods

The respondents of present study comprises of 600 adult Punjabi women in the age group of 18-60 years residing in Chandigarh. All the respondents were apparently healthy. Respondents who were pregnant or having any foot abnormalities or accidental foot deformities are excluded from the study. The respondents were chosen by means of convenience and snow ball sampling. Voluntary participation and consent for the study was sought from each subject. The data was collected using interview schedule.

3. Results and Discussion

Table 1: Preferred fit of footwear

Fit of footwear	F	%
Exact fit	437	72.8
Little loose/bigger fit	163	27.2
Total	600	100

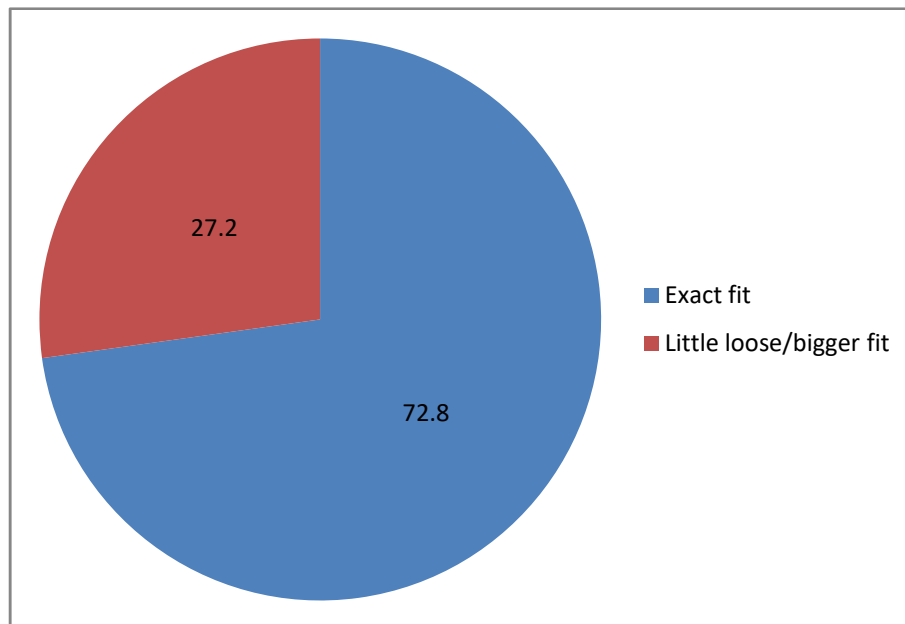


Figure 1: Preferred fit of footwear

Fit of footwear: From Table 1 and figure 1 it is observed that 72.8% women feel comfortable to buy footwear which fits them exactly, while 27.2% women prefer little loose or bigger fit.

Table 2: Foot problems due to footwear

Women reporting foot problems	F	%
	331	55.2

Type of foot problems	F	%
Corns/Calluses	91	17.5
Blisters	76	14.6
Bunions	35	6.7
Hammer Toes	19	3.6
Arthritis	41	7.9
Heel pain	143	27.4
Pain in ball of foot/Forefoot	35	6.7
Allergies on skin/Irritation	46	8.8
Foul odour	26	5.0
Swelling/Cracking of heels	9	1.7

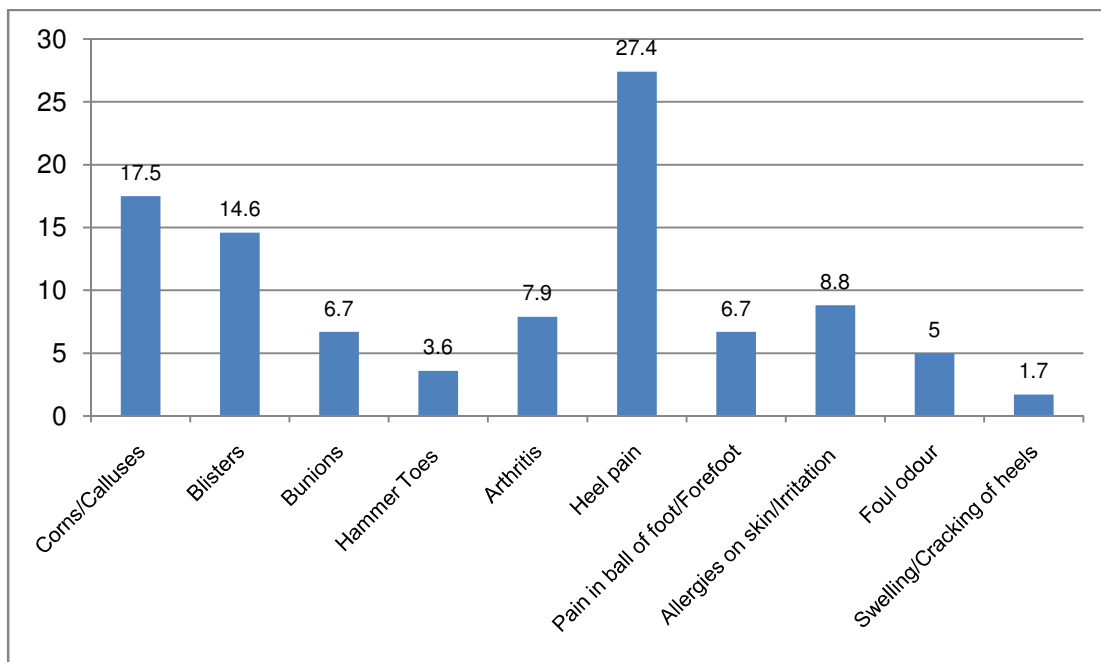


Figure 2: Foot problems due to footwear

Foot Problems (Table 2 and figure 2): Women of present study were asked if they felt one or more foot problem due to the footwear they use, to which 55.2% women replied in affirmative. These women were further asked about the type of foot problems they suffer from. Heel pain (27.4%), followed by corns/calluses (17.5%) and blisters (14.6%) emerge as the major reported problems. Other reported problems include allergies on skin/irritation, arthritis, bunions, pain in ball of foot/forefoot, foul odour, hammer toes and swelling/cracking of heels. Though some women had complained of knee pain and back pain but they failed to identify whether it was due to footwear practices or other causes. Kaur (2013) had observed that rural working women suffered from foot problems such as blisters, edema and backache whereas non-working women mostly suffered from heel pain, corns, bursitis of the heel. Ill-fitting footwear causes slips, falls (Hignett and Masud 2006) and whole body fatigue (Lin, Wang, and Drury 2007). In the study of Branthwaite et al. (2012) footwear choices are led by fashion and image rather than health.

4. Conclusion

It is concluded that adult Punjabi women of Chandigarh, i) mostly prefer exactly fitted footwear
ii) 55.2% women reported foot problems mainly heel pain.

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