

COMPARISON OF COMPRESSION GARMENT PERFORMANCE IN THREE DIFFERENT CLIMACTIC AREAS.

Introduction:

As a general rule garment manufacturers recommend renewal of compression garments every six months. However, anecdotally clients living in areas of higher temperatures and humidity have reported that garment quality and performance is reduced prior to this timeframe.

Aim:

To establish if use of garments in different climactic conditions alters garment wear and hence compressive performance.

Method:

Six participants with either secondary upper or lower limb lymphoedema were recruited from three different climatic regions in Australia - Townsville Queensland, Adelaide SA and Devonport/Burnie, Tasmania. A total of 18 participants completed consent forms and questionnaires to collate information regarding their cancer history and relevant adjuvant therapies, arm dominance, usual exercise regimes and current lymphoedema management regimes.

Each participant was supplied with two 'made to measure' garments manufactured using Jobst guidelines. Garments were tested for compression rating in the Jobst factory in Germany prior to delivery.

Participants agreed to wear their garments daily for four months from December 2009 to April 2010 and record the hours of wear in a standardised diary. Detergent and laundering information was provided by Jobst to standardise garment care.

At the completion of four months wear all garments were returned to the Jobst factory for post-wear testing. Comparisons of compression measures with respect to hours of wear will be used to investigate the effect of climate on garment wear.

Discussion:

Preliminary findings will be presented regarding the impact of climate on garment wear and compressive ability. A possible outcome is the revision of timeframes for renewal of garments according to different climactic regions, with financial implications for both clients and funding bodies.