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Simulating Size Study Findings

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Simulation suits Good or Bad?

- Very limited research on the use the simulation suits in practice
- One study – focused on physical aspects only (Henry, Connolly, & Shields, 2015)
- Unknown if suits increase empathy or reinforce fat stigma

Simulation suit



Study aims

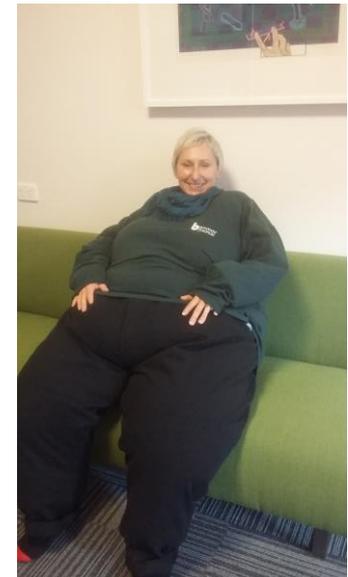
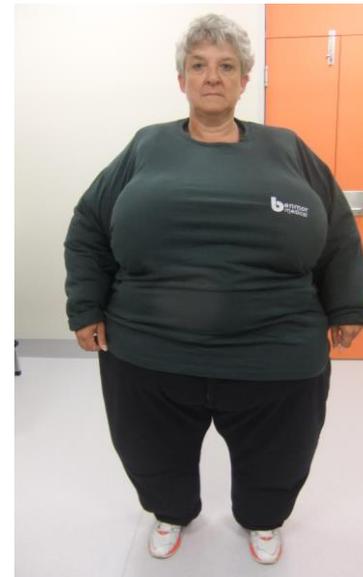
- ✧ To assess the impact of using a simulation suit on the attitudes and perceptions of Health professionals
- ✧ To understand the safety, ethics and effects of using simulation suits



Methods: Pre and post activity questionnaires and interviews

Study population: Health professionals

Data collection: 7 participants



Pre-suit perceptions **bmi**

Impact on health professionals

- Harder work
- Staff safety concerns
- Frustration with manual handling
- **Challenging to have conversations**

Perceived personal challenges

- Mobility issues- painful joints
- ADL challenging- toileting, personal hygiene
- Leaving the house
- Practice challenges
- Equipment issues
- Manual handling- moving impaired mobility patients around

Personal beliefs about obese patients

- Find obese patients distressing and frustrating as they don't help themselves when in hospital
- Resentment for not taking responsibility for their health
- Make judgements about their size/weight

Physical experience

Physical space & visibility issues

Stairs

I went down the stairs...Um, a little bit scary 'cause I couldn't see my feet (P3)

Buses

It was embarrassing on the bus taking up two seats. And at first I didn't realise, I sat down on the seat and didn't realise that a quarter of me was out into the aisle. And I had to move over (P6)

Physical experience

Physical space & visibility issues

Café

Before I sat down I had to move the table out. So it was very obvious that I was very large (P6)

I ordered a drink and it was really hard... so I was spooning it ... it was an iced chocolate and I was trying to eat it and I thought, 'God I'm glad I haven't ordered a meal'. 'Cause it's really hard. I got chocolate all over my T-shirt. So I don't think I'd eat. I wouldn't eat out (P1)

Post suit perceptions



Physical experience

Physical space & visibility issues

General

I was more concerned about banging into things (P4)

Couldn't get it there [gift shop]. I did not feel happy going, I sort of stayed at the main entrance. But I would have liked to have looked at the back of that shop. It has nice little things but you feel like an elephant in a china shop really. You just can't get in (P5)

Physical experience

Physical effects on the body

Tiredness/ exhaustion

And I was just, 'Oh God, this is exhausting!' Just getting a book out of my bag! (P1)

Very exhausted and hot. And uncomfortable... I just feel hot and bothered. Uncomfortable (P2)

Clumsy. Um, uncoordinated (P6)

Post suit perceptions



Physical experience

Physical effects on the body

Restricted movement

It did feel really awkward walking... I brought a bag with me that would go over my shoulder. There was no way that was going to happen. It was just going to fall off. So I found I was clutching everything in my hands (P3)

I could bend my knees alright but I could also feel the weight of my stomach fold even as low as my thighs really... Which would also really prevent you from going fast. So everything really has to be done in slow motion. It just takes a lot longer... I would be out of breath very quickly as well (P5)

Post suit perceptions



Changed physical perspectives

Space, size, visibility & impact on ADL

Just how much more room I took up really... Like having to move the table out, and then move over in the bus...Because of so much sticking out (P6)

I did not think it would be so difficult to be mobilising when you cannot actually see anything below your boobs... You cannot see your feet. You cannot see where you're going to step actually. I think that was the biggest surprise. Um, and anything really on your own body too. Whatever happens on your tummy, you cannot actually see (P5)

Post suit perceptions



Changed physical perspectives

Space, size, visibility & impact on ADL

A new appreciation of challenges

I see bigger people sitting on those seats [outside shops]....Now I realise they just have to sit there. Otherwise they can't even go in the shops... Everything is just a big effort...I can see how you would just need to sit down in between little tasks here and there (P5)

There's a lot of stuff that's actually in the way that I hadn't realised before. Manoeuvring around different people or trying to reach for things is much harder with the weight than just walking around the supermarket. It's so much more tiring (P4)

Post suit perceptions



Social experience

Social interactions

Nothing! Like I didn't exist! Even the doctors...they could have easily fit down those stairs, they were wide as. They would have got down. But because you're in the leper suit, you might catch obesity if you walk past! You know what I mean, it was really odd (P1)

What I did notice was walking along the corridors and even in the hospital, hospital staff don't look at you. Well they don't look at your eyes. They don't make eye contact. As they go past, they drop their eyes and look across at your body... And not a single person smiled at me (P3)

To smile at people and to have them pretend that they haven't seen you smile was really interesting. It was like, 'OK, so why does my being fat mean that my smile has no value suddenly?' (P3)

Experienced social stigma

Post suit perceptions

Social experience

Changed social perspectives

Social withdrawal

I just wouldn't go. I wouldn't go out. I'd probably do online shopping. I'd do my supermarket shopping online too. Yep, it's not fun being out and about (P1)

*And I can understand why. If I was this big I'd stay home!
(P3)*

So now I know that I would not go back into that little shop again which is a shame really (P5)

Post suit perceptions



Social experience

Changed social perspectives

Isolation

Quite isolating I think. Really lonely. Miserable actually. I could be quite easily depressed in this suit if I had to wear it for ages. Awful.... I feel really isolated in this suit. Nobody wants to be near you (P1)

Less judgemental

I probably wouldn't judge them as much now if I saw them walking slowly, 'cause I realise you actually couldn't walk very fast. And if I had seen someone walking up the stairs my size or going very slowly before, I may have thought, "Oh, they're a bit lazy" whereas now I would just think, "Oh, they're doing quite well!" I would feel yeah, more empathy (P2)

Post suit perceptions



New insights to practice

Maintaining social interaction

Look at them. Make eye contact. Sit next to them on the bus. I'm aware of it now. I'm aware of how isolated you feel. I will sit next to them sitting at the bus-stop (P1)

Post suit perceptions



New insights to practice

Empathy & understanding of specific needs

I'm going to make damn sure that they're comfortable about sitting down! I'm going to make sure that there's a big enough seat for them and that it's not gonna move when they sit on it. I'm going to make sure that they've got thousands of tissues to mop up the sweat. That whole spacial thing of remembering that they can't see their feet. And give them time. Because getting somewhere is going to be so exhausting that you can't expect them to do anything straight away. 'Cause actually they're going to need five minutes to recover.

Experience of wearing of suit

'social stigma'

It was interesting as soon as I came out that front door I was like, 'Oh my gosh. I'm not me anymore. I'm this other person that society doesn't really like too much.' By the time I got on the bus to come back I was thinking, 'I've had enough now. I want to be myself again.' It would be pretty awful actually

(P1)

Key messages



1. The physical challenges experienced led to a deeper understanding of how space, size and visibility impacted on ADL and physical interactions with the environment
2. Altered social interactions led to a greater appreciation of how larger bodied people become social isolated and socially withdrawn from society
3. The simulation suit enabled participants to experience a 'pseudo' lived experience of larger bodied people and understand the physical and social challenges faced on a daily basis
 - More work on the ethics of its use are needed in other simulation situations
 - More work needed on how the suit can be used as a means to address social stigma



We would like to sincerely thank all the people who participated in the study

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