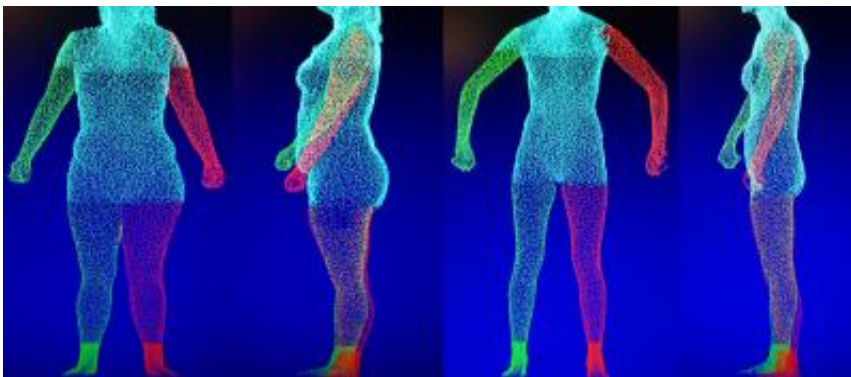


Retailers should re-size maternity wear for women throughout their pregnancies, study finds

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Sohn's latest research focuses on improving the garment fit for plus-size females, using MU's 3D body scanner and 2D/3D patternmaking software. Credit: MU News Bureau

Fashion retailers have seen an increase in demand for maternity wear in recent years, as sales for maternity clothing have increased while overall women's apparel sales have declined. Currently, most retailers produce maternity wear using a standardized size chart that begins with women in their seventh month of pregnancy. Retailers produce garments for women who are earlier in their terms by adjusting the sizes smaller proportionally based on the standardized chart. In a recent study, University of Missouri researcher MyungHee Sohn, an assistant professor of textile and apparel management in the MU College of

Human Environmental Sciences, has found that retailers should reproduce the industry standardized size chart to size maternity wear for women entering their fifth month of pregnancy.

In a study published in the *International Journal of Fashion Design, Technology and Education*, Sohn who was a doctoral student at the University of Minnesota during her research, used a 3D body scanner to monitor the growth and change in shape of pregnant [women](#) throughout their pregnancy terms. She found that pregnant women first begin to show significant changes in [body shape](#) and size beginning in their fifth month of pregnancy and do not grow in a proportional manner throughout their terms. She says this indicates a need for garment sizing beginning with pregnancy terms in their fifth month rather than the seventh month.

"Pregnant women don't change sizes proportionally as they advance through their terms," Sohn said. "By trying to size pregnant women proportionally based on where they will be in their seventh month, [retailers](#) are failing to produce well-fitting and visually appealing garments. This causes the retailers to suffer with decreased sales and [pregnant women](#) to suffer from a lack of acceptably fitting clothes."

Sohn's latest research focuses on improving the garment fit for plus-size females, using MU's 3D body scanner and 2D/3D patternmaking software. She says that while the demand for plus-size garments is increasing, retailers are still struggling to produce garments that are appropriately sized.

"Most plus sizes that retailers produce are too objectively sized, meaning they do not take into account the many different body shapes that exist among plus-size women," Sohn said. "By using our [body scanner](#) we hope to create a more subjective fit evaluation that more accurately sizes larger women as well as takes into account how the movement of various

body parts affects how garments fit."

Sohn is currently recruiting plus-size models for her study.

Provided by University of Missouri-Columbia

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