

Salon Session:

‘Critical Dialogue on Inclusive Human-Centered Apparel Scholarship in the Clothing and Textiles Discipline’

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Body Dressing Work:

A narrative review of the use of apparel as camouflage by people with disabilities to enable belonging and inclusion

ABSTRACT

The researchers of this study live with mobility disabilities. Through autoethnographic study and reflexive inquiry Kealy-Morris (2017) has developed the term ‘body dressing work’ (Kealy-Morris 2022, 2023) to represent the daily stress of getting dressed for people with disabilities who often lack choice of apparel to reflect the selves they wish to present to the world across the spectrum of ‘identity representation through apparel’ -- from standing out to fitting in (Davis, 1992; Entwistle, 2015; Goffman, 1990; Miller and Woodward, 2012; Woodward, 2005).

This salon proposal will report on a narrative review (Ferrari, 2015; SciELO, 2007) the researchers are undertaking to develop a cross-disciplinary investigation within psychology, sociology, embodied dress theory, disability studies, human-centered design, and apparel design studies (both normative and adaptive). A narrative review (NR) has many strengths in an emergent multi-disciplinary and mixed method study area such as adaptive apparel. As noted by Ferrari (2015), a historical NR can be of great importance to locate and critically survey the developments of concepts and principals which can be lost in the constraining methods of a systematic review (SR). Further, in comparison to SRs, NRs can consider multiple research questions allowing for more flexibility in the inclusion selection criteria. Due to the flexibility embedded in a NR, these cannot be replicated as an SR can. For an emerging field of study such as adaptive apparel, an NR can contribute well to a greater understanding of discourse and debate within and around the study area. Additionally, a NR will produce a review of contributions and lack of knowledge in the cross-disciplinary area and propose new areas of study with the aim of developing a rigorous theoretical foundation to support the research and policy initiatives being undertaken in the adaptive and inclusive apparel arena.

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