

Maternity Support Garment: Part I – A Local Market Survey

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Abstract : *Maternity support garment is recommended to be used as therapy to reduce pregnant low back pain. In order to develop better maternity support garment, local market survey was conducted to find the materials and features used commonly in market available maternity support garment. Market survey revealed that comfort, breathability and support were the important features for making maternity support garment.*

Keywords: Maternity support garment, market survey, design, features

Background

Pregnant woman may suffer from low-back pain [1, 2], which often increases gradually during pregnancy [2]. The pain has impact on pregnant woman's ability to work and would interfere with their activities of daily living [3-5]. A feasible and common therapy would apply supportive maternity wear to eliminate low back pain. The results of a study show that support belt is one of the five most recommended treatment options suggested by providers of prenatal health care [6]. Therefore, local market survey on maternity support garment would be conducted to indicate their main features and characteristics which can facilitate the design of maternity support garment in the future.

Methods

Information about retail stores available in Hong Kong for pregnant women care was collected through internet. Pregnant-baby-care stores with on-line shops or websites and selling maternity support garments have been searched by search engine Google in June 2013. Stores with retail shop located in Hong Kong were visited. Information about available brands, styles/names, prices and materials was collected and summarized according to the four types of maternity support garments: belts, briefs, cradles and torso. Features of the maternity support garments were analyzed and discussed with pictures.

Results

Total 20 stores selling maternity support garments (belts, briefs, cradles and torso) were found with retail stores in Hong Kong. The maternity support garment sold in local stores are listed and summarized in Table 1. It is noticed that most of them mention comfort, breathability and support as their marketing strategy.

After reviewing all the existing products, some common features were noticed and summarized below.

(A) Materials

Most of them use cotton inner layer for breathability and excellent moisture absorbency. The use of velvet outer surface provides better comfort to touch. Few of them added lace down maternity belt or small ribbon for decoration purpose. There is velcro design at the belt end for higher convenience to use and to be adjustable. Figures 1(a) to 1(d) show the different materials of maternity support garment.

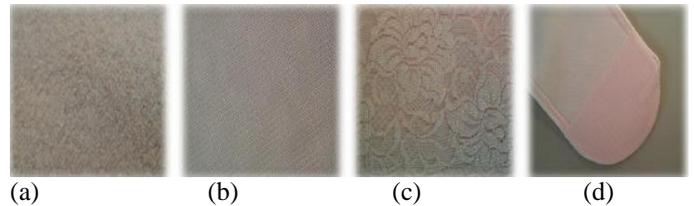


Figure 1(a) cotton inner layer; (b) velvet outer surface; (c) lace down maternity belt; (d) velcro design

(B) Designs of front and back

There are three common front designs observed: (i) Band structure, (ii) Widen front panel and (iii) Adjustable up and down supporting belt. Band structure is easy to use and simple to wear. Widen front panel can help to achieve stable belly. Adjustable up and down supporting belt can stable the belly yet achieve least coverage. For the back, there is a special design of adding 4-step soft plastic bones at back for reinforcement. There are also designs of removable belt with and without reinforcement. Figures 2(a) to 2(c) show the different front designs of maternity support garment. Figures 3(a) to 3(b) show the different back designs of maternity support garment.

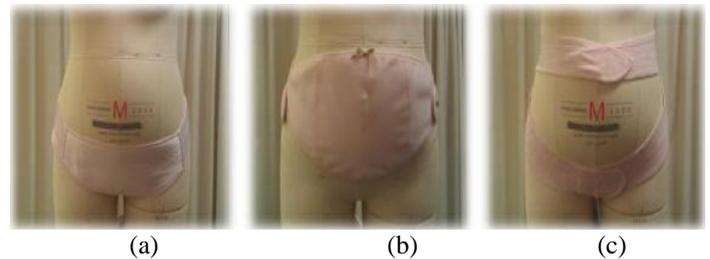


Figure 2(a) band structure; (b) widen front panel; (c) adjustable up and down supporting belt



Figure 3(a) Soft plastic bone; (b) Removable belt

(C) Designs of belt

There are three common finish of the design of belts. First one is that two ends of single belt meet at back. Second one is that ends of two belts cross at back and stick on front bodice. Third one is that there are dual layers of belts to double the force with adjustable tightness. Figures 4(a) to 4(c) show the different belt designs of maternity support garment.

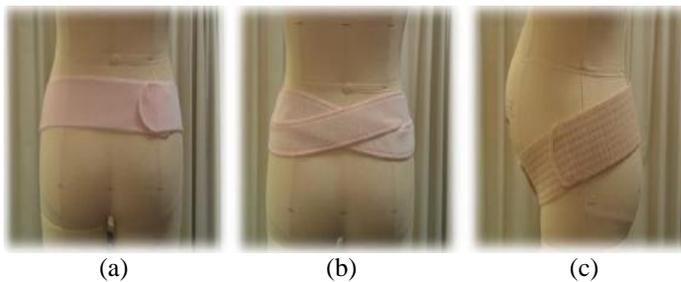


Figure 3(a) Two ends of single belt meet at back; (b) ends of two belts cross at back; (c) dual layers

Conclusion

In this paper, a survey of maternity support garment from local market was conducted. Based on the information gathered. It was found that belts, briefs, cardles and torso types maternity support garments are selling on local market but they all feature comfort, breathability and support as their marketing strategy. Other than the marketing strategy, we analyzed the design features such as (i) materials, (ii) design of front and back and (iii) design of belt of the products available in local market. With the review of the design features of different products, it could help to further develop maternity support garment suitable for local context.

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Table 1. Information of maternity support garment available in local market

Type	Description in the product	Material	Features
Belt	Bandoleer	91% Nylon 9% Elastane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seamless comfort in super-stretch fabric Unique fabric gives gentle support around the tummy and lower back Team with Belly belt to wear your regular clothes
Belt	Adjustable type support belt	48% Polyester 23% Nylon 17% Spandex 12% Cotton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Double belt provide double support with adjustable tightness Widen front panel stable your belly and alleviate discomfort at waist Elastic soft steel at back provides support and straightens back Breathable
Belt	Belly-cover support belt	Self 80% Nylon 20% Spandex Lining 95% Cotton 5% Metallic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full cover and uplift belly to provide protection and alleviate discomfort due to the increased belly weight Velcro design, convenient to use and adjustable Cotton made inner layer- breathable and excellent moisture absorbency
Belt	I-shape type support belt	60% Nylon 30% Spandex 10% Cotton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uplift belly to alleviate discomfort due to the increased belly weight Simple and light-weighted design, easy to use Breathable and excellent moisture absorbency
Belt	X-shape type support belt	Self 80% Nylon 20% Spandex Belt 80% Polyester 20% Polyurethane Lace 88% Nylon 12% Polyurethane Other 100% Nylon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Down maternity belt can support upward the belly to alleviate discomfort due to the increased belly weight Reinforced 4 soft steel at back increase the support force for the waist and back of the body Up maternity belt, adjustable, stable belly, and convenient to wear Lace down maternity belt decoration Breathable Belt end bend inside Velcro tape prevents damage to other clothes
Belt	Back and belly support belt	80% Nylon 20% Spandex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By means of body back to support up the belly to release the discomfort of the waist Down maternity belt can support upward the belly to let baby's weight be sustained by the body back There is reinforced 4-step soft steel design to increase the support force for the waist and back of the body Up and down supporting belt can be adjustable to change body shape during the period of in pregnancy, and the size can be adjusted to meet the requirement according to different body shape. Band structure, easy for use, and simple to wear Made of high-class clothing materials, excellent elastically, and good absorbing power for sweat under air-through function. Patented collection type hook fasteners (patent no.: 161946) there is a piece of female hook sew besides every male hook, so it keeps in sticky each other and wont damage against other cloths whenever in washing or storage
Belt	Double layer support belt	50% Cotton 35% Nylon 15% Spandex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dual Use-support belly during pregnancy, help shape body after delivery Dual layers- double the force, easily adjustable to efficiently support and alleviate discomfort Cotton made inner layer- breathable and excellent moisture absorbency
Belt	Simple type support belt	10% Cotton 60% Nylon 30% Spandex 87% Nylon 13% Elastane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To alleviate discomfort due to the increased belly weight Support and stable your belly Breathable, excellent moisture absorbency
Belt	Whole-belly support belt	Self 80% Nylon 20% Spandex Lining 95% Cotton 5% Metallic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extra layer of protection for mammy and fetus Support and stable your belly Breathable, excellent moisture absorbency
Belt	Pre-natal support belt	polyester cotton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Velvet outer surface provide comfort to touch, cotton inner surface provide softness Breathable elastic belt fit and support belly and can be freely adjusted Uplift belly to alleviate discomfort due to the increased belly weight Removable reinforced belt allow flexible usage