



Topic of the Speech:

Developing a hybrid cooling vest for combating heat stress in the construction industry

Dr. Yueping Guo

Novel Protective Textiles Limited
Hong Kong, China



Dr. Yueping Guo earned her Ph.D. degrees at Institute of Textiles and Clothing, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. After her Ph.D. training, she consecutively joined The Hong Kong Polytechnic University and was a Post-Doctoral Fellow, Research Fellow, Project Manager, Project Deputy Coordinator and Lecturer. Later, Dr. Guo established Novel Protective Textiles Limited and is a Responsible Official of the company. She supervised M. Phil. and PhD students. To date, she has authored and co-authored more than 100 journal publications, conference papers/presentations, technical reports, book chapters and patents. She has more than 10 awards on outstanding research papers, patent inventions and technology transfer.

The inventions from the research projects have been successfully commercialized, including Nano-facemasks, High Performance Sportswear, Anti-Heat Stress Clothing for construction workers and Summer Uniforms for cleansing workers, which won many international and regional invention/innovation awards such as grand prize and gold medal (2016, Geneva), Hong Kong Contraction Industry Council Grand prize (2015), Innovation Achiever's Award (2015), Distinguished Knowledge Transfer Awards – Community Excellence (2017), and has been transferred to the Hong Kong Construction Industry and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department. She served as an editor for Journal of Fiber Bioengineering and Informatics and is the reviewers for CMAJ, American Journal of Infection Control, Textile Research Journal, Industrial Textile journal, Journal of Building Engineering and Marine Pollution Bulletin.

Developing a hybrid cooling vest for combating heat stress in the construction industry

Yue-Ping Guo^{1*}, Albert PC Chan²

¹*Novel Protective Textiles Limited, Hong Kong, China*

²*Research Institute for Sustainable Urban Development, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong, China*

*Presenter's email: yueping201112@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Many frontline workers in the Hong Kong construction industry have to perform physically demanding work under hot working conditions with 35.4 C and 95% relative humidity in summertime, which could reduce work efficiency and time and increase the occurrence of heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke. The purpose of this study was to develop a hybrid, new cooling vest to combat heat stress in the construction industry. Following the functional clothing design process, a problem identification was conducted. Preliminary ideas were formed through the analysis of available types, research, a survey, literature review, and brainstorming. Design refinement was obtained by selecting the available PCM packs with the ideal price and desirable properties; employing fans with high wind velocity and long duration; screening the used fabrics with thin and vapor-permeable properties, excellent air resistance, water repellence, UV protection, and abrasion resistance from 19 commercially available fabrics; and identifying clothing ergonomic design with fit, mobility, convenience, and safety. The desirable thermal functional performance in the new cooling vest was previewed through a computer-aided design platform S-smart system. The design criteria were established and a prototype was developed. The prototype evaluations were conducted using treadmill testing by human subjects inside an environmental chamber and wear trials in the construction sites under actual wearing conditions. The environmental chamber testing results showed that, in a hot environment, the mean skin temperature (35.8 C vs. 36.59 C), heart rate (110 beats/min vs. 116 beats/min), and core temperature of the subjects with the new cooling vest were significantly lower than those with the control (without the new cooling vest). A significantly longer exercise time was obtained with the new cooling vest compared with the control (22.08 min vs. 11.08 min). Significant improvements in levels of coolness, dryness, comfort, and physical recovery were simulated and achieved with the new cooling vest. The results of all measurements suggest that the new cooling vest can reduce the thermal stress of construction workers and improve their work performance and comfort.