

Female horse riders want better bra support

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Credit: University of Portsmouth

Three quarters of female horse riders want bras that better support them, partly for the sake of their health and partly to avoid embarrassment, according to new research.

The study, led by Dr. Jenny Burbage, a sports scientist at the University

of Portsmouth, aimed to establish the impact of bra design and fit and breast size in female riders.

Of the 1,324 women who took part, a quarter reported one or more breast-related barriers to riding.

Nearly three-quarters would like to see an improvement in bra support, style and fit for horse riding.

The research, by Dr. Burbage and Lorna Cameron, of University Centre Sparsholt, and published in *Comparative Exercise Physiology*, highlighted that a greater number of large-breasted women take part in horse riding than in other sports and that bras worn for riding were not good enough.

"Need better support" was the top complaint by women who took part in the study and who had a cup size of D or above.

"Better style wanted" was the second-most cited comment, followed by "better fit wanted."

Dr. Burbage said: "This is the first research to specifically explore breast health issues and bra concerns in horse riders and the results highlighted the need for more consideration in bra design for this group of women.



Dr Jenny Burbage in the labs. Credit: University of Portsmouth

"Many horse riders were dissatisfied with their current bras, the breast was often a barrier to them riding as often as they'd like to, and breast education levels were low.

"Targeted educational initiatives for this population are justified and further research is needed into the demands of this activity on the breast biomechanically."

According to the survey, 19 per cent of larger breasted riders reported they were embarrassed by excessive breast movement and 15 per cent did not like the look of their breasts when they exercise. For those riders within the larger breasted category "Breasts being too big" was cited as the fourth highest barrier to riding, higher even than cost of taking part in the sport.

Across all bra sizes, 44 per cent said their current bra worn for horse riding did not fully meet their needs, with larger breasted riders being less satisfied.

Equine expert and co-author Lorna Cameron: "These results establish that female [horse riders](#) are dissatisfied with their current horse riding bras and that the breast proves a significant barrier to participation in this activity for many [women](#). Further study is needed to measure specific breast movement in horse riding and address these barriers to physical activity within the female population."

The researchers now plan to analyse data collected from horse trials and investigate equestrian-specific breast displacement in comparison to other sporting activities.

Women interested in taking part in forthcoming research and for more information on horse rider [breast](#) health education, contact Lorna.cameron@sparsholt.ac.uk.

Provided by University of Portsmouth

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