As female scientist, I’m asked more often about my clothes than I am about my work. I don’t entirely hate this phenomenon as fashion is my biggest passion after science. I follow more fashion bloggers on Instagram than I do friends—and per a survey conducted by Dana Fashion Designs, I’m not the only one obsessed with fashion accounts on the picture-sharing app. 85% of 2,000 Instagram users surveyed follow accounts that are style, fashion, or lifestyle focused. If that statistic applies to the 8 million active Instagram users, that’s almost 7 million people viewing fashion related content. Moreover, 72% of respondents have made a purchase directly related to content they viewed. This means that not only are a large percentage of people viewing fashion-related content, but they are also engaging with it. Drawing on this influence, I’ve created fashion content inspired by my research on the bacterium that causes Tuberculosis, Mycobacterium tuberculosis. I have designed and constructed two outfits representing various aspects of my research. Each piece was either completely constructed from scratch or significantly altered from an existing piece of clothing. The content is posted on the Instagram account Designing Science (https://www.instagram.com/designingscience/) and the description in the picture will explain details about the science that inspired the outfit. An account like this could be used to not only showcase individual research, but could also highlight innovations in science, technology, engineering and math in a visual and interactive way. For instance, there is a strain of E.Coli that has been engineered to produce silk. Instead of just reading about this innovation, users can see an outfit made from this very silk, read about the process in the description, and ask any questions in the comments. Now comments on clothes are conversations about work.


designingscience This outfit is inspired by the bacterium that causes tuberculosis itself, Mycobacterium tuberculosis. When grown in Petri dishes, groups of bacteria are round and have a rough texture, very similar to the appliqué on the top. The pattern of the pants is made from an actual image of bacteria (green) infecting human lung cells (purple). The image was taken using a fluorescent microscope. The long straight line of the pants mirror the rod shape of the individual bacteria.
designingscience Yes, the design on the shirt is lungs! The lung disease tuberculosis is the leading cause of death from an infectious disease worldwide, largely due to the fact that it spreads easily through the air. When someone with TB coughs, bacteria are released into the air, ready to be inhaled by people nearby. Because it spreads so easily through the air, researchers must work with the bacteria in a special biocontainment facility where they wear equipment to protect them from inhaling bacteria. Part of the equipment is a disposable coverall jumpsuit. It's not normally very flattering but I've fashioned it into a zip-front skirt!