Pharmaceutical packaging design for elderly people: design research as a link for innovation towards better life experience

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THE VALUE OF DESIGN RESEARCH | LUND UNIVERSITY

Pharmaceutical packaging design for elderly people

Design research as a link for innovation towards better life experience

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1 INSPIRATION

Currently, 17% of the EU population, or 85 million people, are 65 years or older.

In 2030, 23% or 125 million people in the EU will be 65 years or older.

In 2060, 30% or 155 million of the EU people will be 65 years or older [1].

Design research → User needs; Industrial requirements; Pharmaceutical packaging

"As we age, we take on many characteristics of various disabilities – our strength reach and mobility diminish, our visual acuity lessens and we become more sensitive to glare; our hearing declines" [2]

"Universal Design is also socially sustainable, supporting the basic human rights for equity, independence and diversity" [2]

References:
1) Olsson, S. Turning Demographic Ageing in Europe into Opportunities. Health Access, Sweden, 2014.
2) Trends in Universal Design. The Delta Centre, Norway, 2013.

2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How is the design applied to pharmaceutical packaging for elderly people?

And what is the value of using design research to assess the needs of the elderly?

3 RESEARCH PLATFORM ON DESIGN

1 PURPOSE

To explore the critical design aspects of the use of pharmaceutical packaging by the elderly.

2 CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

This research was literature-based, fundamented by the combination of concepts from:

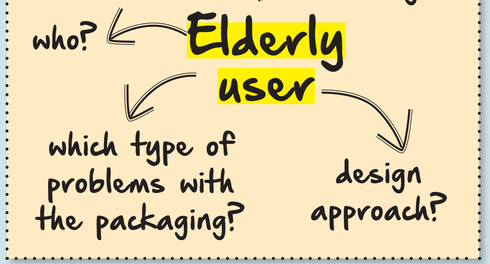
- Design thinking: to understand the lacks in the design research about pharmaceutical packaging for the elderly users
- Inclusive design: to identify the problems of the elderly when dealing with pharmaceutical packaging

3 RESEARCH STEPS

Step 1:

* The understanding of pharmaceutical packaging design as a field of research with different disciplines

Step 2:



4 DESIGN CHALLENGES

Pharmaceutical packaging design has proved to be interdisciplinary, but with lacks of understanding among areas. More design research is neeeded based on:

Insights: *How do designers get insights from the elderly? Are these insights considered by regulation and policies? How do nurses manage the packaging? New perspectives could be developed through design research.*

Observation: *The design research is focused on observing the problems faced by users, but not on proposing solutions or design standards for the packaging of medication. Why?*

Empathy: *Design research recognizes that packages for medicines should be user-friendly, however pharmaceutical research lacks of design inspiration. How can the design explore new solutions for the elderly?*

The difficulties for senior users were grouped as three main challenges:

1 MECHANICAL USE

- Openability: the loss of strenght to open child-resistant containers
- Readability: the difficulty of following the small letters and texts on instructions

2 COGNITIVE USE

- Language: non-clear terms mixed with similar names
- Memory: the difficulty to remember names and doses

3 SAFE AND COMPLIANT USE

- Storage: inappropriate and unsafe use of packaging at home
- Compliance: loss of compliance with a treatment preceded by difficult packaging and unclear instructions

5 COMMENTS AND FURTHER STEPS

- New solutions based on design methods are necessary
- We aim to establish new links through design research, debating with the multiple actors and stakeholders how to improve pharmaceutical packaging
- For the challenges, it is imperative to have user-friendly packaging, accessible for the elderly people, but child-resistant

6 AUTHORS

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