OHSU Center for Women's Health | iGIANT Roundtable

Hosted by Michelle Berlin, MD, MPH, and Renee Edwards, MD, MBA
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Key Findings

- Gender (and to some extent sex) exists on a continuum
- Responsible design should be both:
    - Scientific: beginning with a hypothesis rather than an answer, incorporating evidence and testing, account for the designer's lens or biases; and
    - Responsive: a conversation between the designers and the end users
- The design process cannot be limited to the product itself. If the environment/context in which your user encounters the product does not feel welcoming or appropriate to them, they will not adopt the product. Concepts of gender and cultural coding can be either helpful or detrimental here
- The central tension and ultimate goal for good design (whether based in sex, gender, or another key aspect) is to design a product or process for a group that makes the user feel as if their needs were addressed as an individual

Participants

Michelle Berlin, MD, MPH, OHSU
Renee Edwards, MD, MBA, OHSU
Andra Carrick, MPA, OHSU
Katharine Hart, MS, OHSU
Molly Ackerman-Brimberg, Ziba Design, Inc.
Nicole Cathcart, Cambia Health Solutions
Lori Flexer, CFA, Ferguson Wellman Capital Management
Megan Pugmire, OHSU
Michael Bergmann, Incubator U
Jillian Douglas, Idea Learning Group
Caprice Neely, Under Armour
Colby Schlicker, Watson Creative
Medhi (Mat) Tabrizi, Moda Health

Introductions

Participants were asked to introduce themselves and their favorite childhood toy or experience. The group reflected on how toys, experiences and play are some of the first experiences in which we identify with gender and gender related roles. Toys and experiences included:

- Camping
- Trees and books
- Basketball
- Easy Bake Oven
- Big Wheel
- Pink Tutu
- My Little Pony
- Trees and roller skates
- Skis and bike
- Tennis
- Any type of athletic ball
- Cassette player
- Doll
- Fisher Price Record Player

Defining Sex and Gender

These definitions were reached by group consensus following an activity that required each attendee to define the terms for themselves

Sex, *n.* a genetically determined hormone balance and physical anatomy that distinguishes a species as male or female

Gender, *n.* a personal or perceived identity that exists on a spectrum; how one represents themselves in society; a culturally constructed manifestation of masculinity or femininity

Sex and Gender in the Design Process

- Designing for People: Considering inclusion and diversity can be a challenge, but leads to a richer experience. Focus on:
  - Differing cultural aspects
  - Connecting to meaning
  - Specific biological design (easiest problem to solve for)
  - Designing for gender vs. stereotypes
  - Cultural and social norms and meanings change constantly

- Know Your Product. Understand the user experience (which will be different for different people)
  - Design products that can adapt
  - Welcome the spectrum of users/consumers by designing (with care) the environment where they find the product

- Listen to your end user. Designers must have empathy for places where consumers are tripping over the experience—these are opportunities to find improvements
- Build a business model that takes the user experience and feedback into account
- Consider your specific audience

- Considering Sex/Gender: Disrupt traditional thinking
  - Don't be uncomfortable about the sex/gender conversation
  - Drive design towards need and innovation instead of tradition – drive intersectional thinking!
  - Remove the roadblocks for the conversation across industries
  - Big change starts with small, incremental change

- Balancing Necessities vs. Choices
  - Design is science and art
  - Invest in gathering data for design and leverage the data
  - Designing for sex/gender = economic advantage
  - Antiquated history of design for women – taking men's products and modifying slightly (make it pink and smaller), but what's next? Gather data across sex + gender

- Think about your target
  - The hardest thing to do is to break the tendency to focus on outcomes, or marketing to certain set groups
  - Role of the designer is to consider user/consumer and improve the design for all people
  - Discover human needs and wants
  - Don't assume you know the best endpoint
  - Don't use "I" methodology—break the cycle of designing for your own experience
  - Use evidence based design
  - Recognize cultural coding (expectations for male/female, men/women) – use intentionally
  - Consumer preference vs company direction—these must work together

Additional Resources

- Read, the Elephant in the Valley
- TED Talk: Amy Mullen (Runner, Model, Double Amputee), "Me and My Twelve Pairs of Legs"

Link to our website: http://www.ohsu.edu/xd/health/services/women/about-us/partnerships.cfm