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

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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]

**DESIGN CHALLENGES**

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

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

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

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

**Pharmaceutical packaging design for elderly people**

Design research as a link for innovation towards better life experience

**1 INSPIRATION**

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]

In 2030, 23% or 125 million people in the EU will be 65 years or older [1].

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**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

**4 DESIGN CHALLENGES**

Pharmaceutical packaging design has proved to be interdisciplinary, but with lacks of understanding among areas. More design research is needed 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 packaging for medicines should be user-friendly, however, pharmaceutical research lacks of design inspiration. How can the design explore new solutions for the elderly?

**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

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