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.

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

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.

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

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

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

1. **Mechanical Use**
   - Openability: the loss of strength 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

References: