

Future Flora as a Case Study for FemTech's Role in Science: Tackling the Taboo Head-On

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Abstract: FemTech, a term coined in the past decade, encompasses technological products and diagnostic tools that cater to women's health. While its creation was inspired by the neglect of women's health needs, the FemTech philosophy represents a break from previous feminine products by empowering women to take ownership of their health. We illustrate the neglect of women's health through the necessitated creation of a FemTech industry, in contrast with the absence of a superfluous ManTech industry. This paper analyzes the FemTech movement through a case study of Future Flora, a microbial sanitary pad, in comparison to other microbial projects both taboo and not. We demonstrate that FemTech's success is determined by society's reception of its feminist message. Nevertheless, the movement's feminist message is necessary for the desensitization and ultimate destigmatization of feminine health, the importance of which has been historically minimized. Sociologically, the movement hopes to achieve equitable representation of males and females in science and the market, and ultimately disestablishment of FemTech.

Key Words: FemTech, Feminism, Women's Intimate Health, Future Flora, DIYBiology

1. Introduction

The field of traditional science has historically and consistently deprived women of autonomy over their health. The rise of the women's movement in the 1960s and 70s catapulted an ongoing effort of the inclusion of women and female-targeted products into the general field of science. Despite the increase of female inclusion in science and the landmark approval of birth control, a male-centered lens has continued to dominate the traditional scientific viewpoint, resulting in the neglect of female health, particularly as it relates to intimate health. Aside from research, female exclusion and misrepresentation is embedded in the selection of projects that merit funding, as the majority of venture capital executives responsible for these investing decisions are male. The barrier is further exacerbated as males do not resonate with the global need for female-centered products. The nonexistence of a ManTech or a MaleTech movement speaks to the male lens that science “naturally” takes on. This lack of attention on female health necessitates a movement that advocates for, and is specifically catered toward, female health. This would extend the focus of science and technology beyond its “normal” exclusionary and biased confinements, powerfully speaking to the marginalization and overlooking of women and their health needs. Thus, members of this movement — the FemTech movement — are beginning a wave of empowerment for people who have historically been marginalized and victimized by technology. This paper focuses on a FemTech product, Future Flora, a sanitary microbial pad, which is designed to help rewrite the narrative around women's health and ultimately encourage women worldwide to reclaim autonomy over their health.

2. History of Women's Health

While FemTech is a relatively new term that represents the growing trend of empowering women through the development of female technologies, the women's movement in the 1960s and 70s emphasized

sexuality, family, and reproductive rights, beginning the notion of women claiming their rights to their health. In fact, 1960 marks the year in which birth control was approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Birth control set a precedent for women's health products, empowering women by giving them agency over their bodies and making them active participants in fertility decision-making (Watkins 2012, 1464). Following this breakthrough came the slow inclusion of women into clinical trials with the National Institutes of Health (NIH)'s enactment of the NIH Revitalization Act of 1993 and the FDA's eventual reversal of the recommendation that excluded women (Berlin and Ellenberg 2009, 2). Nevertheless, research funding was still a huge obstacle that prevented women's health issues from being fully addressed. This was depicted through the FDA's approval of Viagra in 1998, which is a drug that enhances erectile function in males, while women's health issues (sexual and menstrual wellness, fertility, endometriosis, and menopause) simultaneously remained taboo and, therefore, largely ignored (Hayden 1998). This continual neglect of women's health necessitated the creation of the FemTech movement and its active advocacy for the inclusion of women's health in mainstream science.

The historical and continual social constraints placed on female health highlight that traditional science, as it currently stands, is not in the position, nor does it have the desire, to serve as the vehicle to provide women with the opportunity to claim autonomy over their health. Equally frustrated with the social, logistical, and political constraints placed by mainstream science, traditionally trained scientists sought out to create a platform free of these constraints. These scientists, joined by individuals from various career backgrounds and experiences, formed the interdisciplinary field of DIYBiology, shorthand for do-it-yourself biology.

3. DIYBiology as a Platform for FemTech

DIYBiology was founded with the principle intentions of creating inclusion and accessibility within science for both traditional scientists

and nonscientists. In revolutionizing the idea of with whom and how science can and should be done, DIYBiology provides a platform for scientific endeavors that intend on breaking the status quo of mainstream science. Among these endeavors is FemTech, an abbreviation for female technology, which was formed out of the recognition by female professionals from various sectors that a shift in society's view and subsequent handling of women's health issues is imperative for the production of women's health products. The movement aims not only to produce products that ameliorate women's intimate health, but also to facilitate discussion and create awareness of fundamental issues in the perception of women's health.

Female technologies are defined as technological products and diagnostic tools that specifically cater to women's health. Ida Tin, CEO of Clue, a menstruation-tracking application, understood the struggle of introducing a female-targeted product in a male-dominated industry firsthand. Thus, in 2016, she coined the term FemTech, in an effort both to reify the female health technology industry and to facilitate conversations about female intimate health. Her intention was to ultimately call attention to an industry that suffered from a lack of funding opportunities due to social stigma (FemTech Live 2021). Sharra Vostral extends this definition to include the development of technologies that contribute to women's empowerment (Layne et al. 2010, 3), depicting the difference between feminine versus feminist technologies. Whereas feminine technologies are designed to be used by female-identifying people, feminist technologies go a step further, as they are intended to not only be used by women, but also to empower women against the predominant patriarchal viewpoint of and influence on science. The need for this movement highlights the exclusion of women's health, especially their intimate health, from the general narrative of science and the overall female participation in the development of such technologies.

The scientific freedom and inclusivity offered by DIYBiology has provided a means for several FemTech initiatives to take hold, as it is an attempt to break the traditional scientific mold. FemTech's untraditional message and goal have necessitated the undertaking of an approach

similar to DIYBiology's in its development and funding models. The existence of DIYBiology cannot be fully independent from the market as it largely depends upon the equipment, tools, and products from commercial websites and supermarkets and receives funding from companies (Meyer 2014,3). Unlike traditional science projects that are typically institutionally funded, DIYBiology projects must rely upon funding from venture capital firms. Thus, DIYBiology projects face a duality of barriers, namely product functionality and efficacy, as well as funding.

4. Venture Capital's Role in Preventing FemTech's Advancement

The establishment of a biotechnology industry forged a relationship between venture capital (VC) and biotechnology that became inherent to both fields' success, as seen by their simultaneous successes and downfalls (Bradford 2003,1). In deciding which biotechnology projects to invest in, venture capital firms identify both the scientific validity and marketability of the pitched product. In the case of FemTech, both criteria are met as the technicalities of the science behind FemTech products are typically scientifically sound and there is an overwhelmingly underserved female market that they target. Nevertheless, the movement remains unjustly ignored.

Despite women comprising half of the population, female health products, especially intimate health products, are not proportionally represented in both science and the market. This reality in the market is a direct reflection of the lack of diversity in investors, being that 96% of partners at venture capitalist firms in America are male (Primack 2014). Many female entrepreneurs, like Ida Tin, feel as though the men they pitch their products to are unable to identify with their products and are therefore unable to see their dire need, resulting in prioritization of and investment in other products. Many male partners have attributed this gender gap in their firms to the structural issue of the gender distribution of graduates from top schools in engineering (Burleigh 2015). While

this might be true, deflecting the issue onto the educational system only further propagates the problem and results in negative ramifications on women's health. Amidst the lack of representation in venture capital firms, FemTech, by means of DIYBiology as its platform, is taking an active role to remedy the taboo of women's intimate health.

5. Women's Vaginal Health and Future Flora

DIYBiology has arguably been a huge contributor, leading the way to redefining our understanding of the relationship between microbes and humans; a relationship that has been extended to women in particular by the FemTech movement. Women's intimate health has largely been considered a taboo topic that is oftentimes frowned upon and associated with stigmas. Nevertheless, vaginal microbiome health is incredibly pertinent to females worldwide as vaginal microbiome disruptions are experienced by the majority of women. It has been reported that 75% of females globally suffer from Candidiasis, a fungal infection caused by a yeast called *Candida*, at least once in their lifetimes. Moreover, 10% of these females chronically experience this particular form of fungal perturbation to their microbiome, getting affected four times in a year or even up to twice a month (Willems 2020,1). The utmost importance in vaginal health is the maintenance of optimal vaginal microbiota levels. This is where Future Flora comes in.

Designed by Giulia Tomasello, an interaction designer and innovator in women's healthcare through her combination of biotechnology and interactive wearables, Future Flora is a harvesting kit designed for women to treat and prevent vaginal infection from *Candida* by creating a sanitary pad with bacteria (Tomasello 2020). Future Flora references a long history of DIYBiology concerns and goals in addressing women's health needs. In a biotechnology advertisement for Future Flora, the importance of the vaginal microbiome is discussed while common cultural scripts that shame or erase vaginal health are critiqued. Future Flora is then proposed as a form of DIYBiology technology that

can increase vaginal health by restoring vaginal microbiota levels. This wearable biotechnology was designed as a way to empower women, as the advertisement describes that “being able to take care of yourself is empowering” (Tomasello 2020). This proposed wearable biotechnology opposes issues surrounding exclusionary science and scientific bias by empowering women who have historically been excluded from or victimized by technology.

Despite the scientific innovation represented by Future Flora, the feminist technology earned an award for its artistic innovation. While Future Flora has been unsuccessful, other DIYBiology projects that are also microbial in nature have come to the forefront and have been actualized. Through close analysis, the feature that appears to distinguish Future Flora from other microbiome projects and dictates its success is the social taboo associated with the realm of women’s intimate health. Ultimately, FemTech’s success in destigmatizing society’s view on women’s health can only occur through embracing and tackling the taboo head-on.

6. Future Flora as Bio-Art

This unique and potentially revolutionizing product for women’s health remains unseen in the market despite Future Flora’s acquired accolade. In 2018, Tomasello was awarded the STARTS Grand Prize for Artistic Exploration for Future Flora by the European Commission for “artistic exploration and art works where appropriation by the arts has a strong potential to influence or alter the use, deployment, or perception of technology” (“Future Flora.” STARTS PRIZE 2018). Nevertheless, despite the garnered attention, the proposed product has yet to come to full fruition; it was only a prototype kit for treating and preventing one’s own vaginal yeast infections. With technologies such as Future Flora, it is important to be mindful of how much is just artistic provocation and how much is actually intended to be developed. Even the type of award the product received was based upon its “artistic exploration,” as opposed

to its scientific merit. Why has this technology, which seems to be so technically feasible, not come to fruition?

The artistic recognition garnered by Future Flora coupled with the halt of its development and introduction into the consumer market speaks to FemTech's role, association, and shared implications with bio-art. According to Frances Stracey,

Bio-art is least successful, and most contentious, when the science is reduced to mere aesthetic spectacle, and no account is taken of the specific or paradigmatic differences that affect how one discipline is mediated through another (Stracey 2009, 500).

As the field of bio-art continued its expansion, it became clear that the "bio" prefix attributes responsibility to the artist to include a message or moral in their work. Many bio-artists craft their art as a means of exposing social problems and depicting ethical issues within science through artistic visualization. Similarly, the FemTech world is also burdened with the responsibility of inspiring and enacting social change through their products as seen through Future Flora's mission to destigmatize vaginal health.

Despite Giulia Tomasello's development of a technological novelty in DIYBiology, Future Flora won the Grand Prize for Artistic Exploration rather than for scientific innovation. Society's consideration of women's intimate health and labeling of feminine products as taboo strips away the technological legitimacy of hacking the vaginal microbiome by turning Tomasello's product presentation into a female health art piece. Research into the microbiome and its direct impact on human health, especially immune function, is a hot topic in both traditional biology and DIYBiology. The fact that for Tomasello to have received recognition for her contribution required her product to be recognized as an influential piece of art, rather than a breakthrough science product, highlights the barriers FemTech faces. To survive the market, FemTech product creators and designers must sell their message before they sell the product. The

success of FemTech is conditional on both the novelty and efficacy of the technology as well as the liberating and destigmatizing intent behind the product.

7. Future Flora and #MeToo Movement

The jury statement released by STARTS when awarding Tomasello for Future Flora hints at how the social climate of the time, due to the #MeToo movement, might have influenced their decision in awarding Future Flora the prize. Their statement begins with the claim that,

“Through the thick digital forest, there was a distinctive and loud call for returning to nature, attention to life, biology, the self, the body — especially empowering the female body and its sexuality which came as no surprise after a year of #MeToo. Responding to this collective consciousness wave, the jury agreed that Future Flora embraced the issues of reclaiming female power — with DIY and no shame — in a way that could prove empowering to others seeking to find a voice” (“Future Flora.” STARTS PRIZE 2018).

The released statement makes it seem as though Tomasello’s project only found recognition in the competition because the jury deemed it appropriate for the times as certain political and social conversations surrounding women and the #MeToo movement opened the floor for such a technology to become accepted. This speaks to the ultimate role of FemTech as empowering technologies: women can only really be partners in their health once they have been empowered by society to do so. Nonetheless, this leads one to wonder whether Future Flora would have garnered much attention from the jury had it not been for the change in the societal atmosphere surrounding women and their rights. The #MeToo movement set a tone for society to finally begin listening

to and trusting women and their experiences. However, the question as to whether this ruling was opportunistic and made to keep a politically correct stance, or if it was truly made in support of FemTech, remains.

The continuous censoring of women's bodies and their intimate health reflects that despite the #MeToo movement serving as an opportunity for real reform, the social taboos placed on women persist nonetheless. The #MeToo movement used social media as a platform to unify a community of women who are victims of sexual and verbal exploitation and ultimately spread a message of female empowerment and autonomy. In a similar fashion, FemTech continually employs social media as a means of gaining traction and outreach through advertisements, given its powerful and supposedly less restricting forum than traditional science journals. While striving to destigmatize their message and promote their products, many FemTech executives came to realize that backend algorithms on major social media platforms like Facebook and Google were flagging their advertisements as unsuitable and inappropriate for marketing. Advertisements depicting female physicians recommending pelvic floor weakness treatment for women were flagged as overly sexual, resulting in a product being barred from using social media as a platform for outreach (Lovett 2020). FemTech pioneers are actively approaching both aspects of the issue by confronting the major social media and advertising agencies responsible for the inequitable banning of their message and by continuously facilitating conversation about women's intimate health in an effort to destigmatize it within society.

FemTech's ethos, as a feminist rather than feminine effort, is to redefine science and its market to encompass health services and technologies that go beyond catering to collective health needs, but to the individual needs of males and females. The exclusion of women in medical endeavors was in part due to the assumption that there were no significant sex differences in regard to medication response, which itself was born out of the misrepresentation, and thus lack of sex-specific data (Liu 2016). Nonetheless, as many of the restrictions on female participation in science were lifted, the female effort to gain

autonomy over one's health continues to face challenges. Ultimately, the only factor that has remained is the stigmatization and taboos surrounding female health. FemTech is taking a revolutionary approach to this stigma by accepting it head-on through increasing graphic and progressive campaigns and advertisements in an effort to desensitize society to the female body. They destigmatize through desensitizing. By employing graphic advertisements and facilitating conversations in the media, FemTech leaders are hoping to induce a desensitization of the female body and female health in mainstream society. Only then, they believe, can female health be divorced from its stigmas and be rightfully recognized as a medical issue warranting attention and funding. As opposed to fighting individual battles, the coined term and creation of the FemTech movement serves to unify women's health advocates and product developers in the collective struggle to combat the stigma. The neglect of female health needs inspired the creation of an industry that would foster these initially "sensitive" conversations to create a wave of major sociological ramifications where the traditional lens of science and the market would abandon its androcentric lens and work to equally include women. This patriarchal embodiment of the scientific market is specifically reflected in the absence of a ManTech or MaleTech sector, simply because its existence would be redundant. Constrastingly, female-centered products are not nearly offered on the same scale in the market, thus necessitating the creation of the FemTech industry to push against these boundaries. Nevertheless, the ultimate trajectory for FemTech is not to remain a separate entity indefinitely; rather, once integrated into the media and eventually into mainstream science, the need for FemTech as a separate industry will become obsolete.

Assuming FemTech succeeds in its mission, it can be expected to have a major sociological impact. Once the stigmas associated with female health are removed, a drastic shift in the perception of female and male bodies can allow for them to be viewed as equally intimate. This is not to be confused with the fact that they are inherently different, however, as the recognition of their individualized needs is what permits their equitable representation and treatment.

8. Future Flora's Barred Success

The emphasis on art and Tomasello's decision to hold back from continuing the product's development demonstrates that although the science is ready to be actualized, society is not ready for this product. In an interview posted on Digidult, Tomasello states that while Future Flora is currently largely speculative and may become mass-produced one day, her main intention behind designing the product was to first and foremost "generate a conversation from an educational perspective, both to make women feel at ease, and to make society itself understand that these medical issues are actually very common." Tomasello continues that "you can design the most beautiful product in the world, but it is useless if nobody can use it" (Fontana 2019, par. 30). Due to society's lack of readiness, pioneers like Tomasello have been forced to work outside of the scientific and technological market, hence being recognized for the artistic component of their products. Tomasello understands that in today's times, despite the grave progression of the feminist movement, her product is still deemed as unpalatable to consumers, thus making it unmarketable. In response, she must use her voice to educate and push society to overcome their ignorance of female health issues, a universally experienced phenomenon, and become progressive enough for her product to become palatable.

As a pioneer in the FemTech field who has the ultimate global goal of inspiring women to be involved in their intimate health, Tomasello decided to take an alternate path to reach her goal. Thus, she is now focusing her efforts on Alma, a non-invasive wearable biosensor that detects pH and lactic acid to monitor vaginal discharge to help women suffering from recurring gynecological conditions. She claims that while Future Flora may only become available in years to come, Alma may find success earlier (Fontana 2019, par. 20), and perhaps is better equipped to receive the necessary funding from venture capitalists, as it is devised as an accessory. Tomasello's decision demonstrates the stark contrast between the social and market acceptability of FemTech products such as Future Flora versus Alma. In essence, Tomasello understands that Future

Flora would not find venture capital funding and ultimate success because of the biotechnological social climate rooted in a male-centric lens. Alma, due to its sensor technology, can be compared with other existing biotechnology accessories that are not only used by females but also males. As a sanitary pad, Future Flora only finds familiarity with half of the population, which is inconveniently the half that is underrepresented in venture capital. It is this aspect of being applicable and understood by males that distinguishes the chance of secured funding and subsequent success.

9. DIYBiology Microbiome Projects

A hallmark of the DIYBiology movement is working with the microbiome, a community of microorganisms that inhabit a particular environment, to better understand and capitalize on its relationship with humans. The rise of antibiotic resistance catalyzed the paradigm shift in science's perception of bacteria. The approach to dealing with bacteria went from viewing it as an enemy that needed to be eliminated, to understanding it as an integral and everlasting component of the commensal relationship with the human body. Scientists began to understand that bacteria and the microbiome's role in this relationship is one of high complexity. Independent of Future Flora's ultimate identity as a liberatory biotechnology, it also poses a counter to consuming more antibiotics. Of the many projects undertaken by DIYBiologists, combatting the antimicrobial resistance crisis is arguably one of the more important and larger efforts. In place of consuming antimicrobial prescription drugs, Future Flora encourages women to naturally rebalance their vaginal microbial levels on their own without the use of pharmaceuticals by introducing additional microorganisms to the region. Due to the accessible nature of DIYBiology projects, which allows them to be created by anyone at any time, many do not garner attention from VC firms. This lack of funding from institutionalized investors has left many DIYBiologists, specifically those experimenting with the

microbiome, to resort to crowdfunding. Crowdfunding, the method of acquiring public funding for a project before its fruition, allows anyone to publish their projects with hopes of raising money to actualize their products. Many DIYBiology microbiome projects have employed the use of crowdfunding to support product development (Richman and Apte 2013). While securing VC funding has proven difficult, FemTech projects like Future Flora may find success through crowdfunding efforts as they can more heavily rely upon the monetary support of females who may benefit from the proposed products. The current market that restricts technologies like Future Flora from coming into fruition, as compared to the simultaneous flourishing field of DIYBiology microbiome projects, further proves society's autonomy regarding which scientific breakthroughs are worthy of attention.

10. The Widespread Acceptance of the Gut Microbiome Findings

The novel understanding of a commensal microbiome was expanded into many sectors. Their success, however, was directly tied to society's acceptance, or lack thereof, of the products and associated messages. With the advancements in science revolving around the microbiome came the implementation of curating a healthy microbiome through natural remedies. Increasing gut microbiome diversity in an effort to halt *Clostridium difficile* (C. Diff) reproduction began receiving attention in mainstream culture as people started to implement practical solutions into their daily lives. C. Diff, a bacterium known to proliferate during times of dysbiosis, whereby microbial diversity is reduced and beneficial bacteria is lost, is directly proportional to increased rates of diarrhea and sepsis (Bien et al. 2013, 53). There has been a recent rush of encouragement from gut microbiome researchers to utilize long-known natural remedies, such as eating probiotic and fiber-rich foods to recruit healthy bacteria to the gut. Society's readiness to accept the mission of reclaiming the gut microbiome was matched with a trend of consuming probiotic foods including kale, yogurt, kimchi, and kombucha, as well as taking probiotic supplements. The trend gained so

much attention that most people viewed it as the new healthy way of living and were unaware of its connection to antibiotics, let alone the microbiome. The implementation of this new healthy lifestyle practice across food advertisements, diet infographics, social media, and other outlets in contrast to the lack of product development of Future Flora speaks to the importance of society's acceptance of science. This example depicts the different attitudes associated with being empowered to treat gut dysbiosis versus vaginal dysbiosis, highlighting the increased societal barrier FemTech faces.

11. Future Flora versus Fecal Microbiota Transplants

Another microbiome project that shares Future Flora's need to accomplish both tasks of fighting the stigma and making products that have the potential to contribute a widespread positive impact available is the fecal microbiota transplant process. Fecal microbiota transplants are investigative medical procedures in which bacteria are transplanted to repopulate a recipient's gut microbiome (Kelly et al. 2014, 3) This seemingly outlandish project gained traction despite the perceived "grossness" of feces and the endoscopic procedure, or the oral ingestion of fecal pills, required. Due to the overuse of antibiotics in an effort to cure intestinal infections, individuals left with a depletion of healthy bacteria in their gut resulted in the FDA's approval of fecal transplants from donors with diverse gut microbiomes. The taboo aspect of dealing with feces, despite its medical use in this case, caused slight apprehension in accepting this methodology. It ultimately got approved, however, by the FDA as a treatment for extreme cases. Evaluating the acceptance of fecal transplants in comparison to Future Flora's lack of productization highlights how different societal factors serve as barriers to science. While the two projects share many hurdles, the difference in their success is that the taboo Future Flora faces is female-charged.

12. Social Climate as Barrier to Funding

The described DIYBiology microbiome projects, namely Fecal Microbiota Transplants and Future Flora, fit the main two criteria categories of scientific validity and marketability that venture capital looks for when making investment decisions. Fecal microbiota transplants are marketable as they were designed to replenish healthy bacteria levels in individuals with dysbiosis. The scientific validity of the procedure has also been confirmed upon receiving FDA approval. Similarly, Future Flora meets both the scientific qualifications for funding through its innovative wearable biotechnology and market criterion as it is applicable to women worldwide. Yet, Future Flora has fallen short of success as it has not been able to secure proper funding and finally become available for use. The remaining outlier that contributes to this variance in product actualization is the social hurdles associated with female intimate health that Future Flora must combat.

13. Conclusion

The tangible product of Future Flora, divorced from the societal message it connotes, is simply a bacterial product. It is its categorization as a FemTech product, and thus its subsequent association with the feminist movement, that bars it from being valued for its scientific progress and becoming actualized to help people. This association and feminist message are necessary, however, for it to break through the existing taboo aspect of feminine health in science and society and finally gain positive attention and success. This reflects FemTech's need to embrace this association and feminist message head-on to fight against the taboos in society. Thus, the very aspect of FemTech products that will hopefully eventually allow them to succeed is what is currently preventing their success. FemTech comes with the obligation of pushing society to question the very restrictions it puts on women and its impact on women's health. It is hoped that these efforts will eventually make way for the market to become desensitized

to the taboos and accept technologies geared towards women's intimate health. In essence, society necessitates a specific field of FemTech to ensure women are empowered within science. Nevertheless, the message can only prove impactful once society is ready to receive such a message.

Future Flora ingeniously melded several facets of DIYBiology through the user-friendly and at-home component of the product, microbiome experimentation, and the mission of FemTech to optimize vaginal microbiota levels in females worldwide. While these feminine, and oftentimes feminist, technologies possess scientific merit that would typically aid in their effort to receive funding, they face the added barrier of combating social norms that decrease their social palatability when pitching to venture capitalists. The creation of Future Flora brought exposure and facilitated discussion about issues surrounding women's health that the medical community should consider in their production of pharmaceuticals and technologies for women. The project can be considered a FemTech pioneer in paving the way for women to begin being active participants in their own health and wellbeing. In order for FemTech to make a lasting impact and finally cause society to surrender its negative scrutinization of women's health, it must tackle the taboo head-on. If its mission is achieved, FemTech may cease to exist as an individual industry since equity of male and female products will be maintained in science and the market. FemTech's success can come about through education and empowerment, normalizing conversations about women's health, designing products that help support women worldwide, and blurring the boundaries between technology and the human body – a process that is just getting started.

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