

Health Informatics and Technology

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Obliterating Menstrual Anxiety and Shame

Amanda Brief
my.Flow Inc., USA

My. Flow seeks to change the conversation around menstruation. Currently a pervasively taboo topic, it is something (over) half the world's population experiences every month, for decades. We want to empower women through insight, helping them to learn their flow. Menstrual innovation is embarrassingly lagging; it's about time women had a smart device to prevent both staining/leakage, and infection related to leaving their tampons in too long. We are leveraging technological improvements in the realm of sensing and circuitry to create a tampon monitor, which alerts its user as to the saturation level of her tampon via a notification on her phone. What's so prolific about it being 'smart' is that it's the first tampon of its kind. The user experience aim is convenience – currently, you can't check the level of your tampon, so many women err on the side of taking their tampon out prematurely, which is not only wasteful, but also quite physically uncomfortable. Our market research shows that over half of women would buy a product that would help them prevent staining/leakage on their period, waste/excess spending due to premature removal of their hygiene product, and a product that would help them predict when their period would stop and start each cycle, the heaviness of their period on a given day, and a whopping 82% are ready to buy a product that would help them prevent Toxic Shock Syndrome and other menstrual-related complications.

Biography

Amanda Brief completed her Bachelors in Biology & Society from Cornell University and later, her Master of Engineering (MEng) in Industrial Engineering and & Operations Research from UC Berkeley. It was at Berkeley, last year, that she was part of a class project team at the Center for Innovation Technology and Research in the Interest of Society (CITRIS) that developed an early prototype of a tampon monitor, which could monitor fullness level with the intention of sending the tampon wearer their saturation data in real time. This turned into her startup, my.Flow, Inc., which got picked up by HAX Hardware Accelerator in early 2016, where she and her team received a grant in order to devote themselves to full time development of a fully functional tampon monitor that will aggregate data for women everywhere in a way that has never before been possible. Ms. Brief's interests and experience had occupied the women's health and advocacy spaces even prior to founding my.Flow. She was a counselor and trainer of counselors for the EARS peer anxiety reach out hotline at Cornell, and an active member of the Vagina Monologues movement. She interned at Rockland Family Shelter, working with survivors of domestic abuse. After her studies she was a research assistant at Columbia University Medical Center and Beth Israel Medical Center, with emphases in neurobiology and mental health disorders. Ever since she went back to school to do her Post-Baccalaureate studies in engineering, she sought to combine her predilections for both quantitative and outreach related endeavors, and has found this in my. Flow.

akbrief@gmail.com

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