

About Us And Our Ideas: Young People (With Diabetes) Experiences Working With Designers

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Young people can be engaged in the design process: as informants (Katterfeldt, et.al., 2012); in making prototypes as a source of creative inspiration for designers (Fitton, et.al., 2012); proposing design concepts in workshops (Glasmann and Kanstrup, 2008); or designing via creative design activities (e.g. animated scenarios) (Katterfeldt et.al., 2012, Iversen and Smith, 2012). Our study aimed to evaluate the use of methods in co-design by post-project interviewing young people (with diabetes type 1) designing innovative diabetes self-care service proposals.

Ten young people (8 girls, 2 boys) mostly in their mid-teens (one 9-year old), their families, a Diabetes Specialist Nurse and four design researchers participated in eight creative workshops from July 2011 to May 2012. The 2-hour workshops followed a process of sharing experiences and identifying relevant issues, creative exploration of 'blue-sky' possibilities, convergence to practical proposals and prototyping (Design Council, 2005). Popular cultural references (e.g. Cool Wall, X Factor, Dragon's Den, Wallace & Gromit) were used at different stages of the design process to establish a design language (Sustar, et. al. 2013). In interviews, the young people reported that the project enabled them to: share their diabetes experiences with peers (for the first time, for some); to reflect on their relationship with their condition; and to contribute ideas towards final design proposals:

"It was good because it wasn't [the designers'] opinion, we all had a choice and they combined it [ideas] so everyone got involved." (Young Person)

Designers have to use popular references with caution, as some might be boring or misunderstood (e.g. Wallace & Gromit) by young people.

Through participation and ownership of outcomes these young people believed they were representing other young people with diabetes more widely

and, consequently, influencing their own and others' futures.



Figure 1: Young people participating at the workshop

References

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