

**INSIDER
INSIGHT**

Trust and Women's Health

A 2-Week Research Sprint Curated for Motivate Design

Your Insider Insight Team



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Method

Insider Insight is way to get inside the minds of your buyers, customers, and end users through connection and conversation to understand who they are, what motivates them, and what they need.

**No labs, no scripts.
Just candid conversations that reveal what's real.**

Our team of researchers and strategists then synthesize the data and deliver compelling stories, findings, and unique opportunities that provide powerful insights.

Mission

Background

To attract, serve, and gain the loyalty of women patients and consumers through their products and services, healthcare brands must first gain their trust. We wanted to better understand how that trust can be earned and maintained. So we asked questions to explore what healthcare providers and pharmaceutical companies need to know about building and maintaining trust and credibility.

The Question

How do women determine who or what sources to trust when it comes to their health?

- + What sources do women listen to and why?
- + When do women value other sources over their doctor and why?
- + How is medical professionals' credibility undermined?
- + Where do opportunities exist?

The Findings

What we heard

What we heard.

When it comes to their health, these women trust...

- 01 those with experience.
- 02 what they can understand.
- 03 those who know them.
- 04 a holistic approach.
- 05 honesty and transparency.

What we heard.

01
**These women trust
those with experience.**

What we heard.



I feel like if it's [advice or information] coming from a reliable source, and it was someone who had a similar situation or knows something more than I do that has done more research on it, I'm willing to give anything a try because like you said, I completely agree that medications don't fix everything. To be honest, they haven't always been around, so there are, like, the tricks and things that they used to do back in the day.

Jackie (23)

Stay-At-Home Mom

What it means.

To these women trust is those with hands-on experience; therefore, they want sources with tried-and-true remedies.

While a source with credible experience is important to these women, having experience is more than simply having a degree. They classify a person with experience as someone who can relate to the issue, whether it's through seeing patients or experiencing the problem firsthand, as a clerk in the health department of Whole Foods or a friend may. Some women took medications for years only to find that a simple over-the-counter cream or an old-school remedy worked best. When women struggle to find a solution with a doctor, they often turn to sources outside of the medical field with a proven relationship to their issue or a tried and true remedy.

“And of course I would see his reputation as a doctor, the kind of experience that he has, how many patients are happy with his treatment, so that would help me...I would trust a doctor that has actually hands on treated patients. I would give more weight to his experience.”

Sheila (53)
Dentist

“I wanted to know what other people had experienced and not just a professional's opinion, who would be one person's opinion, but I wanted to know what other people in similar situations to me had experienced.”

Juniper (27)
Teacher

“My mom is obviously not a doctor, not a nurse, but she has an awareness of bodily, symptoms, stuff like that, so ... And, also, she's been alive a lot longer, so just if she's ever had an experience with that, I kind of trust her for that.”

Hannah (25)
Social Worker

“Two years of doctors, medications, the pain, the embarrassment, and because this old man lived there, he knew the climate, he knew the area. It's one of those things. Right place, right time. And the old school trick worked. Had I not bumped into him, I'm not so sure that I still wouldn't be dealing with it to this day because let's face it, a doctor in Michigan isn't going to know how to cure a scratch from an orange tree, especially when I didn't recall it was an orange tree...So again, old school advice outside the doctor, and the source helped way more than any of the specialists I went to.”

Hannah (25)
Social Worker

What we heard.

02
**These women trust
what they can understand.**

What we heard.



The doctor wasn't doing their part in trying to educate me...I feel like maybe that's why I go to the internet and why maybe other people do because we want to feel educated about our bodies. You want your doctor to be doing that for you. If they're not, we have this awesome resource.

Fern (29)

Freelance Chef/Photographer

What it means.

These women trust information they can understand; therefore, they want tools and resources that help them be part of the conversation.

When these women don't receive information that makes them feel like they are being educated by their healthcare professional, they often turn to alternative sources such as WebMD or online blogs. Rather than going online to replace their doctor, they seek online sources to educate themselves alongside their doctor. For some women, having the right vocabulary makes a big difference. The need to look online for education can become more necessary when a long-term treatment plan is recommended, due to heightened risks and investment. These women want to begin their journey informed and remain informed throughout the entirety of the process.

"I don't trust all the sources, I do in-depth research once I get on to a site and I get a broad idea of where my symptoms fit. I see whether they're being backed by scientific evidence or whether it is a paid kind of an article by a pharma company or by one of the surgical supply companies. So I don't trust those articles, I would read in-depth whether they're backed by a lot of medical evidence and a lot of studies have been done which are corroborated by other studies."

Sheila (53)
Dentist

"Obviously, if they give you, say an antibiotic, you take it for 10 days. So something of that nature, yes, I'm going to listen to what the doctor says...But if it's something that's going to be long term or more even a short long term, if you will, I would definitely seek other things. Perhaps it would line up with the doctor, but that's a personal choice I guess to make at that time, depending upon what other information is given to me. Because the doctor's human too, and they're not always right. And we learned that in the past, that doctors make mistakes."

Sam J (49)
Homemaker

"While I'm waiting, I might look it up to be like, "Okay. What am I trying to focus on or what do I think the issue might be?" It's kind of stupid, but I feel like I'm looking to be like, "Oh, what do I feel like is right?" But that's definitely their job. Sometimes I feel like without [looking on the internet], I might go to the doctor and they'll be like, "What's wrong?" I'll be like, "My stomach," but I really have all these things I'm trying to point out and I don't have the right language for it sometimes."

Fern (29)
Freelance Chef

What we heard.

**These women trust
those who know them.**

What we heard.



I'm going to a doctor that I really trust, who is trying to figure things out with me, listening to what I'm saying, really hearing what my symptoms are and trying to work with it instead of already diagnosing me. I feel like now, I'm way less likely to look anything up because I'll just ask her and she answers. I trust her and she's available if I want to call and have a question. It just seems like, 'What's the point of looking on the internet when I have this resource that knows me and my body?'

Fern (29)

Freelance Chef/Photographer

What it means.

These women trust those who make them feel heard; therefore, they want a big picture approach that takes into consideration their life and their bodies.

These women want to feel like they are being heard and often don't get that from medical professionals. Some have turned to non-traditional practices such as psychics or acupuncturists because of their broadened approach to understanding their patients. They value an approach that includes an understanding of their background, where they come from, and how their lifestyle may be contributing to their symptoms or concerns. When there is a concern that they will not be taken seriously, some women will bring an individual as an advocate to their appointment.

"I've also been experienced where I've been brushed off and I've been written off, and been diagnosed with something off the bat from the doctor without them even listening to my whole story. So much so, that I've had to bring other people into the room with me to these doctor's appointments so I don't feel like I get walked over or dismissed by the physicians. Also, to ensure that I'm articulating well enough what my issue is and having a witness to that."

Kayla M (36)
Production Coordinator

"I definitely pay attention to body cues. I pay attention to time too, if they spend time with me or if they're rushing me out. I pay attention to their ability to listen to what I said and what I'm able to articulate. Or, if they talk over me and just make up their mind without listening to everything."

Kayla M (36)
Production Coordinator

"[An acupuncture lounge] would do a pretty lengthy intake with them. They would spend so much time with people, picking over what is out of alignment, and knowing to ask the right questions, too. But they would just go more in-depth, 'Tell me about your daily life, what are you doing? How are you sleeping? How are your relationships?' ... It's a more of a holistic view, rather than just, 'Tell me your top symptoms, and then we'll try to, you know, fix them.'"

Lydia (32)
Massage Therapist

What we heard.

04
**These women trust
a holistic approach.**

What we heard.



Western medicine is so focused on medication to kind of gloss over a problem and to stop symptoms, rather than get at its root.

Lydia (32)

Freelance Chef/Photographer

What it means.

These women trust a holistic approach to address their needs; therefore, they don't want quick fix solutions.

These women are willing to take the recommended steps to remedy their symptoms, however, many have experienced instances when medical professionals prescribe medication to rapidly fix symptoms only for those same symptoms to pop up again in the future. This can cause them to question their doctor if they prescribe the same solution. When these women see natural remedies or alternative solutions solve the problem for themselves or for others, they begin to doubt the advice of their medical professional.

"Medication doesn't fix everything. I have a friend right now that is going to the doctor and the dermatologist and to a specialist because a fun rash appeared on the top of his hand, and they keep giving him this cream. And they keep giving him these pills, and nothing's working. So technically he's been on all that for nothing, and someone just told him to ... There was a simple over the counter medication, and it's clearing it all up."

Sam J (49)
Homemaker

"All of them missed all the non-obvious signs which was extreme body itch, fluctuating of temperature and it wasn't until the weight loss and the tumor was popping out the side of my neck that they actually diagnosed that... So due to everything that went on and still goes on with my body from that, I became more knowledgeable, I went into the medical field, I scoured different options holistically and homeopathically to deal with the things I know ended up with due to whether it be the cancer or the cancer treatment.

[...]

[Talking about a blood pressure medication] I think it's absolutely insane because what they're trying to do is cover up the fact that I have pain not that...

...I want to take pain meds in any way. I want to solve the problem. So physical or whatever needs to be done. I don't want surgical or opiate help if possible and that's what doctors push for."

Vanessa (35)
Personal Trainer

What we heard.

05
**These women trust
honesty and transparency.**

What we heard.



You have to think outside of the box and not always just think the doctor is right because again they've been trained from meds, meds, meds.

Lydia (32)

Freelance Chef/Photographer

What it means.

These women trust honesty and transparency; therefore, they don't want healthcare providers with an agenda.

When it comes to their health, these women do not want to feel like anything is forced onto them and associate the trust of their healthcare provider with honesty and transparency. However, many also associate their doctors with medication and often express skepticism with pharmaceutical sources whose motivations are unknown. When women question the motivation of doctors and pharmaceutical sources, they may feel more like a pocketbook than a person.

"I think it's also knowing doctors have that agenda, and legally, most doctors can't prescribe enough, unless it's a naturopath or something. But, it's also just their push for medication too that I don't agree with."

Lydia (32)
Massage Therapist

"And right now big pharmacy definitely is a scary thing because for the most part, to them, we're just kind of monetary value. We're not a person."

Juniper (27)
Teacher

"I'm very suspicious of pharma companies. They are just pushing one pill after another down your throat. I feel most of them, I don't know whether I'm right or I'm wrong, even the ranges, the clinical parameters for blood pressure or blood sugar levels, I feel it's all driven by pharma. It's like a big nexus. It's all these big corporate giants. They are trying to push more medicines, more surgeries, so I'm a little skeptical. I'd rather try the home remedies, because you don't lose anything. [...]

I trust my friends because I know that they're being honest in their answers, and I know that they're not trying to force a perspective on me. An article has a source and that source has a motive...

...And me asking my friends mostly just for their experiences and their opinions, they're going to be truthful and going to be honest and have my best interest at heart because they're my friend."

Vanessa (35)
Personal Trainer

In Summary

When it comes to their health, these women trust...

- 01 those with hands-on experience.
- 02 what they can understand.
- 03 those who know them.
- 04 a holistic approach.
- 05 honesty and transparency.

The Reframe

This research reveals that while women trust medical professionals' intentions and knowledge overall, they do not feel like the medical industry as a whole has their best interest at heart. Women trust individuals with experience, who care and listen. They know what healthcare and pharmaceutical companies are trying to sell them, but they are wary because they don't know who these companies are as people. With these findings, healthcare companies can design solutions that are more likely to earn women's trust.

How might you increase trust between women and healthcare systems or pharmaceutical companies?

Next Steps

“So What, Now What?” Workshop
Insider Insight 2-Week Sprint

Thank You

For questions and further inquiries,
please contact our Program Manager:
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LISTEN

Unpack the next layer
with Insider Insight.



ASK

Use a structured set of
questions to round out
the topic with
traditional research.



IMAGINE

Participate in a design
thinking workshop.



DO

Begin to design a
solution with a design
sprint.